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South Asia Work Papers 2



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South Asia Group, Horsleys Green

South Asia Work Papers is an occasional publication of the South Asia Group, designed to facilitate the exchange of ideas among field linguists working in South Asia. Papers appropriate for publication in this series include data papers, papers which exemplify the application of various analytic approaches to languages of the area, papers that address descriptive, typological and comparative issues as well as technical helps in the process of moving from data through analysis to description and publication.

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Correspondence:

South Asia Office Horsleys Green High Wycombe, Bucks HP14 3XL England

#### About the Volume . . .

A number of papers aimed at assisting would-be linguistic consultants in gaining effectiveness as stimulators and encouragers have been circulating through private channels, some for many years. A seminar for linguistic consultant training held at the University of North Dakota session of the Summer Institute of Linguistics during the summer of 1992 provided the occasion for reviewing these resources. At that time it became clear that at least parts of this underground treasure should be made available to a wider public.

This volume contains two statements on the practical conduct of linguistic consulting. The first is a classic statement by Joe Grimes. For years he resisted the idea of publishing these notes. In his letter of permission he tells us why:

A long time ago I thought about putting out the Nasuli lectures on consulting. But then I realized the they were only supplements to the training I had already been giving the consultants for about two months, so they knew from experience what I was pulling together. On those grounds I realized that the notes alone could be deceptive, lacking the role model. (I was consulting with each of the consultants on their projects, as well as training them.)

Now, however, the role model that goes with the notes is pretty much up to his ears in a translation project, so it's probably appropriate to go ahead and put them out anyway.

The notes cannot be expected to achieve what the apprenticeship did for so many of us. Nonetheless, the notes have gained the status of underground classics which are useful even apart from the personal apprenticeship. We reproduce the unaltered text of the 1951 paper.

The paper by Ivan Lowe looks at linguistic consulting through another pair of eyes. It is a much more recent statement written by one, who like Grimes, has served widely as International Linguistic Consultant within SIL for many years. Both statements are personal statements with intensely practical goals in mind. By making them available in this form we hope to benefit those who have the desire and the opportunity to encourage and stimulate their colleagues in linguistically relevant ways.

Austin Hale

Alice Davis



# Consulting in Linguistic Field Work

# Joseph E. Grimes Cornell University and Summer Institute of Linguistics

[Lectures to consultants, Nasuli, Philippines, June 1971]

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#### 1. Introduction

Field work goes best with the right kind of help; but how to give that help is not part of ordinary linguistic training. Hence this discussion.

These comments are slanted toward the organized research that is characteristic of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, but the same ideas apply outside workshops. They work for a visit to a field worker in a tribe, and they work in a university.

I make one assumption that is not always made, namely that the person who is doing the analytical work is learning the language as he goes. For a person to go out and collect data,

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then come home and perform an analysis on it is never satisfactory. I know; I've tried it. I also assume that most intensive consulting is done in structured field workshops, seminars like this one.

There are five sets of roles in consulting. Senior consultants run the workshop. Junior consultants do not have the primary responsibility for a workshop and may be there to be trained. Participants or field workers are the ones working directly on languages. Language helpers, native speakers of the languages studied, assist the field workers and are the arbiters of linguistic form and usage. Finally there are supporting roles like base administrator and buyer without which no workshop can run.

What I have to say falls into three sections. The first, the main ideas, includes Topics 1 to 4. Consulting as such takes up 5 to 9, and workshops 10 to 14.

## 2. Why Consult?

If you have ever tried to work on a language without having someone to talk to, you know how it can be. Just having someone look over your shoulder can break open things that we missed because we didn't see the forest for the trees.

Consulting is also a form of on the job training. In working on language, as in anything else in life, we can't stand still; we go either forward or backward. Consultation is a primary means of helping people to go forward. In a consultation session, for example, people are very teachable, much more so than in linguistics courses, where they may take in only what they need in order to pass the test. But in a consulting situation, people usually learn more than just what we say. They dig for themselves, follow out ideas, and learn by the dirty hands approach of putting what we say to work. So the payoff per hour of consulting invested is much greater than that of formal teaching.

Consulting brings new perspectives to people. It is staggering how fast linguistics has developed in the past ten years. Consulting helps people keep in touch with the new ideas that are continually being found useful.

Consulting also has something to do with our standards. We want to keep our linguistic work competent, but without help the general level of it may sink. This is one of the places where the notion of publishability comes in--requiring work to be good enough that an editor accepts it. The main reason we insist on publishability is that it gives the field worker the assurance that he really does know what he is talking about. It also makes what he has done

helpful to somebody else, because if it is clear enough for an editor, then it is clear enough for a colleague.

Another area in which consultation keeps the standards high is that of coverage. Someone working by himself may think, wishfully, that by looking at one text he has everything he needs to back up what he has to say. But a consultant turns up things that the field worker himself had not thought of. So consultation makes the field worker extend his coverage to be sure he can actually substantiate his claims about how the language works.

Coverage also refers to the literature on related languages. We hate to have people go to the work of rediscovering the wheel. Often somebody else has worked out the very principle the field worker needs to crack his problem, but he does not realize it. By guiding him through the literature, by making sure that he has looked around, we eliminate work that he might get himself into unnecessarily. (There is an old fiction in linguistics that each language has to be approached exclusively on its own terms. This was useful to the extent that it broke the dominance of Latin as a base for grammar. Now we know from related languages, from totally unrelated languages that have faced similar problems in similar ways, and from studies on the nature of language itself, we have a wealth of information on possible solutions to problems that may come up. The thing that is unique about languages is not so much what goes on in each, but how a particular language combines certain universal factors.) We expect people to be well read in those works that say something about the problems they are working on-not in everything that has been written in linguistics, unless we are running a degree program, but in everything in the area that they are working on at the moment. We do not want them to lay themselves open to criticism for not having done their homework.

Another thing people get out of consultation is a feel for the pace of work. We can't drop somebody off at a jungle airstrip, say, "Analyze!" and expect good results. Even with the experience that a person gets from courses in field methods, working with informants and all the rest, to a certain extent he has learned in an artificial situation where food and shelter, for example, are provided. Yet most people who go to the field steadfastly refuse to believe that in a field situation they can learn even more than in a field methods course by being immersed in a non-artificial speech situation. In the field the language comes at them all the time; anyone who puts his head in the door is an informant the minute he opens his mouth. In fact, few people believe they can move anywhere near as fast in the field as they really can. So in consulting, we try to give people a feel for how effectively and how fast they really can work without putting themselves under undue pressure. (I am not talking about people like Franz Boas, who is reputed to have worn out three informants per day, one in the

morning, one in the afternoon, and a third in the evening. I am talking about garden variety people doing what anyone actually can do if he only realizes it.) Good work habits may include such things as secretarial science; very simple attention to work procedures raises efficiency considerably.

The notion of setting up and adjusting a schedule is another real help people can get from consultation. Making up a schedule, seeing how it works, revising it—it's amazing what people do when they set themselves to do it. Guiding people through the experience of achieving a series of small goals is the secret. We all think in terms of big goals, but to achieve big goals we have to think first in terms of small ones; and this is something we can show in a consulting situation. The experience of doing things and actually having them come out right is a revelation to many field workers.

Another part of consulting is the view ahead. We work not on one problem along, but also to set the stage for work in the future. For looking ahead a person wants to choose the next most important area to work on, the problem that will be the most important one when the current one is taken care of. Blocking the languages out with a proper sense of proportion, estimating what steps are necessary, and estimating a reasonable pace for attacking each on are the components of planning the next stage.

Consulting aims at tangible results, not fuzzy ones. To tell someone, "Go figure out a language," is fuzzy. But if you say, "We've got three months. We intend to work out something that makes sense and contributes to the knowledge of the language," — if we go after it in concrete terms, at the end of three months we have something concrete. The person who did it can say, "I did this," and know what it was he did, as a milestone in his understanding of the language.

When a person works outside this atmosphere, there is a strong tendency to just say, "I hope I get something done." And then he chips away at it a little without being able to recognize when he has accomplished it. He may even have performed wonders, but he doesn't know it.

#### 3. Assumptions

We make several assumptions at the start of a workshop. They color everything we do.

One is that the field worker and his language helpers are capable of working out anything that needs to be known about the language. Usually all that is missing is some intermediate know-how, which is what the consultant supplies. Sometimes the consultant just supplies the inspiration and stimulus to get on with the job; the field worker and his language helper may

know perfectly well what needs to be done and how to do it, but they have lacked the time to do it. Working with a consultant structures the situation enough that they can do it.

One of the advantages of getting new workers into consultation soon (my recommendation is that they be in a workshop after three months in the field) is that new workers generally learn most of what they know about working effectively with their language helpers, and vice versa, in a consultant situation. They develop a feel for how to proceed rapidly and confidently if we pick them up at the right time.

Another assumption that is always worth making is that everybody who comes to a workshop is rusty on the very ideas that will be the most help to him. Everybody gets out of touch with things; all have other preoccupations. So we assume, not that everybody has been keeping up on all the literature, but that most people let slip most of what they know, including the points that are going to help them the most.

The corollary of this is we don't condemn people for not having read all the right things. The idea is not to hand out black marks for not having read this or that. (Graduate examinations are the traditional places for that.) Instead we try to guide people to the things that are going to help them especially to the essential literature. We do it through seminars, through directed reading, through consultations.

We always make the assumption that the field worker and his language helpers are capable of understanding all the principles that bear on the analysis they are trying to make. Nothing that is worth while in linguistics is so abstruse that field workers cannot understand it; it's just that sometimes we try to make it sound that way.

The other side of this is that they comprehend most easily the ideas for which they see a need. There are many things in linguistics that none of us ought to worry about at the moment because they do not contribute to what we are doing now. The only ideas we need to be concerned about at any moment are the ones that we have to use. Those ideas field workers can understand. And those their language helpers can understand too. Never underestimate the mental power of an informant.

There is a definition of a university that says that it is a library around which are clustered people who tell others how to use the library. The point is that the ideas that will help a person the most may be things that we as a consultant don't know ourselves. Yet we can guide people into reading things that contain those ideas together with the specific points we direct them to. Get them within firing range and they will find much more than if we try to impart all the ideas ourselves and filter the literature. This idea is not essentially different

from the one behind translating the Bible: if a person's spiritual knowledge always has to be mediated through someone else, there are certain things he is unlikely to come across; whereas if he has the Bible in his own language he will get insights that the translator himself never responded to. Same idea.

We assume a number of areas in which field workers always need help. One is in organizing what they already know. Usually the solution to what a person is stuck on is not far from what he already knows and feels in his bones, but has only though halfway. Organizing what he knows at the outset will either get him a significant step onward in his journey, or will solve the problem for him outright.

People need help in expanding what they know to cover all the factors that are in operation. Several times in the last year I have consulted with people who have all the facts of a phonological systems at their fingertips; everything is categorized, yet they have felt that the keystone of the arch is missing. By asking a few more questions, relating the phonology to the grammatical groupings in which it operates, we get a tremendous clarification. This is only a slight extension of what they already have put together, but it takes into account another factor or two that they did not realize were part of the picture.

People need help in cross checking the consistency of the ideas they have about a language. This comes out when people start writing down what they have found and as consultants we start finding holes in it. This coherence checking is a help in analysis because sometimes it uncovers blind alleys. From the consultant's point of view it is mainly a matter of broadening out throughout the whole area, making sure that nothing has been overlooked and that everything hangs together coherently.

People need help in explaining to somebody else what is going on. To make ourselves clear about anything in this world is a major accomplishment. When people concentrate on trying to explain something, they usually uncover factors they never dreamed of. I expect to find this in every workshop, and so far it has never failed me, because when people start trying to be clear about what they have already found, it is then that they really begin to learn.

Another place where a consultant is a help is one that we might not think of in this dimension: helping people to believe that what they are doing is really worth while. Many people will work on a problem because they have been told to. But if you let them see that what they are doing is worth while, this can revolutionize their outlook, because they tend to believe that most of the time they are not quite doing the best thing. We had a man come to a translation workshop once who had been working for twenty years and had published nothing. He was discouraged. He had convinced himself that he couldn't possibly make a

good translation. When we sat down and looked at it, we saw he was doing everything right. But nobody had ever told him so. It took most of the workshop to convince him that he was on the right track. When he finally saw the point—well, it did something for him. Assume that everyone you consult with will profit by just being shown that he is getting somewhere. I would say that convincing people of their own abilities is at least half of consulting, and probably the most important long term effect of the workshop.

Another assumption to make is that no two participants in a workshop need exactly the same thing. They have different experiences in learning, different perspectives on language. Different people think in different ways. What is duck soup for one person is incomprehensible to another; yet there may be no difference in their intelligence. We know people who think of things geometrically and people who think algebraically; some picture relationships and others put them into formulas. If two people like that get talking together, the lack of understanding on points on which they really agree may be amazing. We also have splitters and joiners; some people classify down the gnat's eyelash and other people lump great gobs together. Each horrifies the other, the one by his supposed sloppiness and the other by his over meticulousness.

Some people are happiest working with details and others are much more interested in relationships. Detail men like to classify; the others are interested in why the classes go together and what they do. In business, detail people tend to be accountants, draftsmen, salesmen, and maintenance men—woe unto him whose maintenance man overlooks details. Big picture, relationship, organization oriented people tend to go into areas like advertising and management. It is not that one person is more intelligent than the other; they see life differently.

You get people who are oriented toward things and people who are oriented toward processes. Some people will say, "What do you call it?" while others say, "What's happening?" It is hard for two people like that to understand each other. Actually we seem to be at that turning point in Western society, coming out of a stage when naming and classifying was the big thing, and believing now that processes are important. Linguistics has gone through this in the last fifteen years. It is still a turning point, because you can't make this kind of change in a whole society in fifteen years. The recent book by Jean-Jaques Servan-Schreiber *The American Challenge*, touches on this; European business men tend to be thing oriented and American business men process oriented. The European business man (though this is only a useful caricature) likes to get numbers down in his ledger and people behind the right desks, while the American gets at the movement of things, to the consternation of his European counterpart.

Each field worker has a different history of what has already been worked out either by him or by other linguists. We have people here working on Ivatan finding out things Lawrence Reid never dreamed of; but he wrote a monograph on Ivatan that they don't have to redo. They may change it some, but basically that job is done, so the point where they start is not the point at which someone going into a language that is completely unstudied would begin.

The corollary of all this is that a consultant has to be willing to tackle anything. We are generalists, not specialists. We may specialize out of workshop, but when we are consulting we can't afford to. We have to be willing to tackle anything, even if we do it by the two bookmark method, in which we are three pages ahead of the person we are consulting with. That's all right; we can read as fast as they can and even stay a little ahead of them if we have to.

#### 4. Goals

PROBLEM: First, each field worker needs a problem that is worthy of his effort. It has to be worth while from the point of view of the person who is doing the work, not from the point of view of the consultant. The only reason a person should work on anything in a workshop is because he needs to know it. (This is a point to remember in applying for grants. It can be difficult unless they have sufficient leeway written into them that a person who needs to work on a topic that does not fit the subject of the grant can still participate.)

It takes several weeks to find out what a person's need is. We set aside the first three weeks of this workshop for exploration. Some people still don't know, but eventually they will. Count on initial confusion. If we budget for it, it will not bother anyone.

One way we get out of this initial confusion is through introducing topics in seminar sessions. Expose people to a broad range of things, as in a cafeteria where they can look around and pick up ideas about what they really want to know. As soon as they decide what it is they need most to work on, they go right to it. By allowing them to interact first with a whole array of ideas we help them clarify what it is they are trying to find out.

Another source of direction is ideas suggested in consultation. I try to spend more time asking questions than I do making pronouncements. Those questions are all for the purpose of suggesting things that might possibly work. I don't know which will, but I don't know which won't. We have to lay a lot of ideas in front of people before they can define to themselves what it is that they need. They also get ideas from skimming references which may or may not be pertinent. The point is to interact with as many potentially valuable ideas

as a person can try out as fast as he can handle them, because people really need this crowd of ideas in order to narrow down for themselves what it is they want to know.

Different fields in S.I.L. have different requirements for what a new worker should do. Some are detailed and others are broad. Field requirements are part of what we take into account in defining problems. In evaluating how they bear on what a person should do in a particular workshop, remember that where a person stands in his knowledge of a language is a very complex matter. There is no check list we can give, no Guttman scale that will say that if a person knows this we can assume that he know that as well. It's a multifaceted problem. Therefore, if a person has gone to a certain stage in meeting the field requirements of linguistic analysis, that still doesn't tell us or him what he really knows.

We also remember, on the other hand, that the routine analytical requirements often embrace what a person needs to know quite adequately. Field requirements are set the way they are for a reason, and that is because people typically have certain needs, so that there is a certain predictability to it.

If in doubt, sometimes a couple of weeks spent on one of these routine analytical jobs may show up what a field worker really needs. I have yet to see a person who could wrap up the morphology of a languages without knowing something about the structure of discourse. Yet we traditionally think of morphology as something to be done right away and discourse as something to be done only at the very end of the process, if at all. I have had enough experience with people being unable to understand a phonological system until they put it together with the grammar of phrases that I now regard this as routine. So if you think of phonology as something completely independent of grammar, remember that Kenneth Pike said, years ago, that it isn't that way. There's a lot about syntax we can't say unless we are prepared to dig into lexicography, because many restrictions turn out not to be syntactic, but rather entailed by the meaning of the words.

Here are two problems of equal importance to a field worker, and he can't decide between them. (Some people prefer not to decide; they want us to decide for them. That's a different story. Don't.) If the two problems have equal importance to him, give preference to the one that has broader implications for other languages. For example, whoever here makes the best statement of how the focus system in one language of the Philippines works will earn the gratitude of quite a few people.

Remember things that are typologically similar, not necessarily in terms of related languages. Thurman's 'Chauve medial verbs' is a good example of this. He took up the problem of linkage; but instead of just talking about Chauve he took it back to thematization, then

showed how it carried across to at least one of Eastern Highland languages, in which it was originally worked out, and pointed out parallels in the Philippines and Brazil. Because he took the trouble to set linkage up typologically, now we can all say what is a linkage and what is not, and say it in a way that is meaningful for a number of languages.

We try to calibrate importance for general theory. In training new people the only practical thing we can ever give them is a good theory, the more abstract the better. Specific manipulations and operations in a specific sequence are limited to the one language for which they have already worked. A solution that has wide implications theoretically is to be preferred to something else that is of equal importance to the field worker. (On the other hand, if we have an idea with great theoretical implications, but with no promise of getting the person who is doing the work unstuck on anything, we put it in storage rather than playing the theoretician at his expense.)

Each participant ought to try working on several problems, then concentrate on the one that will give him the greatest payoff. This has to be his decision, not ours. If it is his decision, he will do something really worth while. If it is out decision, we may have to follow him around with a pitchfork to get him to do anything, and that isn't worth the ulcers.

In connection with this, encourage decision-making in general. Encourage it from the start because people have to make decisions soon. We don't do this by preaching sermons on how important it is to make decisions; we do it by forcing people to make decisions. For example, even for an appointment for when to get together next, I always give two alternatives and the consultee makes the choice at his convenience. This is deliberate, to give experience in decision making. Later on if someone comes up with several analyses, I will assess the merits of each with him, but he will have to decide which one really makes sense. You see, there are factors involved that a consultant does not know. The field worker may not have verbalized them, but they are in the back of his mind and are not in the back of the consultant's mind. So if I discuss several analyses that he has thought — I may add a few more of my own — the decision as to which makes the best sense will never be mine. Encourage people to make decisions by confronting them with decisions to be made. It's a healthy process.

CLEAR ANALYSIS: Not just any analysis, but a clear analysis is what we need. Unless it is clear it is not usable, and we assume that the person who is doing it does not yet know what he is talking about.

For clarity common sense is to be preferred above all else. There is no point in being abstruse if plain language tells what we have to say. You know the intellectual principle of Occam's razor; entities are not to be multiplied needlessly. Apply it. Keep things simple.

A good analysis always integrates with linguistic theory. Even theoretical innovators start where current theory is; they are innovators because they know it well enough that they can ask questions nobody else has asked.

Linguistic theory does several things. First of all it may suggest unexpected consequences. Weak points, when stated against the background of general linguistic theory, show up as such. Another way to say this is that linguistics is a discipline, and it is of value to submit to it.

It also makes it easier to communicate your results if you keep within the bounds of theory. Granted that some things may be more awkwardly expressed in one kind of linguistic theory than in another; yet the doctrine of distinctiveness is not a saving grace. Logical consistency, however, is. The real problem in field work is to find out what in the world is going on in a language. If it makes sense in terms of what we know in general about language, we can always find some theoretically respectable way to express it. If not, there may be something wrong with it.

Clear presentation is part of the clear analysis. There is no such thing as having a crystal clear analysis with a muddy presentation. The analysis is bad if the presentation is. This principle does not work the other way around. We can have a crystal clear presentation with a bad analysis; clarity itself is no guarantee that the analysis is good. Even so, clarity makes it easier to see where the holes are.

Some technical terms are inevitable in linguistic writing. Both special notations and jargon can be valuable if they are defined. Give the benefit of the doubt to plain English wherever possible, however; it may work wonders.

If you read a draft of an article you simply take what it says at face value and follow out the consequences, by the second paragraph you may be so mixed up on an early draft that it takes half an hour to get out of the woods. Show your consultee where he led you into the bushes. On the next draft you may get into the fifth paragraph. When you can to clear through an article at face value and come out right, it is ready.

Much of consulting consists of taking what the field worker says to you or writes down on paper, and trying to say it back to him in your own words, seeing how he reacts to it. If you have it all wrong, perhaps there is a flaw in the way he explained it to you. If something a

person says depends for its clarity on something he told you in an earlier consulting session, it will not hold water. It has to be right there on the paper at the time.

A different organization of what someone has already written sometimes works wonders. We suggest outlines to people who seem to be stuck in spite of having the data essentially correct, because the trouble may be in the way they put it together or in their perspective. A good guide for clarity in expression is William Strunk, Jr., and E. B. White, *The elements of style*, the best do-it-yourself guide there is.

PLAN FOR FUTURE WORK. We are opening up new areas of interest for people, getting them to think about things they never thought about before, because these new things may be exactly what they need to know next time. We help them set a goal for later development. If working on a language is like getting to the moon, consulting is a parking orbit — it gives them a stage they can blast off from. To expand idea horizons, we give people suggestions on problems that they know that they are still far from solving, along with ideas and readings; we leave a trail of unsolved problems behind us. We try to look in all directions, not to solve everything in one workshop. Look at what has been written about English; and we are still finding out things that we never knew.

Suggest emphases for informant work after the workshop. Translation problems too are ultimately linguistic problems, and the certainty that one has reached a good solution for them is achievable only by linguistic means. Other things to look forward to come from the area of literature — literacy and writing.

When people thing both in terms of distant goals and of immediate goals and scheduling, occasionally they miss accomplishing all their goals, but more often they exceed them. Even if they do not, they will know by how much they misestimated and they will revise future plans realistically. If they keep exceeding their goals it will encourage them to take on greater goals.

If we can build into people the feeling that there's more than one way to skin a cat, we achieve a major victory. Anyone who things there is only one possible way to do things puts himself in a bind. But show them where to get help, even by radio.

Help your consultees keep up their capacity for work. Anyone who works alone gets into the habit of slacking off, and the consultant can help just by keeping a person moving. Even good workers get stuck, and instead of turning to work on something else they spin their wheels

Demonstrate good habits for getting around obstacles. For example, teach people to budget for interruptions. Any goal setting they do has to assume all the ordinary interruptions of living in a village, sickness, and time out for group service. That way, even if everything goes wrong they can still expect to accomplish something worth while.

Help people to assess their priorities constantly. Priorities shift all the time. We need to think every morning about what really needs doing today. Show them how to write down each morning the things that need to be done that day in the order of their importance, then do them in that order of importance. By the end of a week they will have accomplished twice as much as they thought possible. The number of things that have to be done at any one moment is very small. So part of your goal in planning for your consultees' future work is to build ideas like these into them.

#### 5. The Consulting Session

WHERE: It is best to have a place where you can work without people wandering through or coming to the door. Consulting also needs to be compatible with proprieties when men consult with women and vice versa. You should have adequate air, and either enough of a paper supply to encourage doodling or a blackboard.

WHEN: Each field worker should see a consultant at least once a week. Much more than that can be too hectic to get much done. If several senior consultants are in a workshop, each consultee should check in with the same senior consultant throughout the workshop, but the junior consultants should rotate because two heads are better than one. More than one point of view is beneficial when the consultants work as a team and follow up whatever came out of the last session. Some consultants may specialize in a certain type of problem in a workshop, but ordinarily regular rotation is best.

Each consultant should have no more than twenty hours of face-to-face conferences a week. If he consults more than that, his effectiveness goes down because he has no time to read, write, think, or take care of his correspondence. If can also be psychologically wearing, seeing too many people one after another. Deduct the amount of time a consultant spends lecturing from his twenty hours so that he can prepare for it.

For junior consultants, part of their training is to be consulted with, they should get as much time from the senior consultant as anybody else. Doing consultation is better learned by apprenticeship than any other way.

HOW TO CONSULT: The tone of a consultation session needs to be professional to get much done. Get right down to business. Consulting is a tutorial situation. It is where many people really learn their linguistics, not in school or at the workshop lectures.

Make sure you keep the consulting session happy. Try an informal agenda for a more effective us of time. There are four parts. First, the person you are consulting with brings you up to date on what he has been doing, or more important, on what he is trying to do and why he is trying to do it. There is a reason for having him do this: if he has to restate his own perspective as he goes he clarifies that perspective for himself, and that is the most important thing he can get out of consultation. This is another reason for rotating consultants; the next consultant he explains himself to knows nothing about what he said last time. The consultee has to think continually about what he is doing, how it is organized, what he is driving at, and why. It also lightens the memory load on the consultant. I ask people to bring me up to date on what they have been reading, and what work they have done.

The second point on the agenda is having the field worker bring up problems to the consultant. At this point the consultant asks a lot of questions to clarify what the problems really are, because the real problem is not usually what a person thinks it is at the time he brings it up. He may be skimming the surface of the problem area, whereas the consultant might see either that there is a fairly simple solution to it, if he looks at it in a different direction, or else that it is part of a larger problem that fits together with something else.

The third point is for the consultant to make suggestions. The important qualification on this is that there is little point in making a suggestion about something that we don't really understand. This is one of the reasons why a consultant asks questions all the time. Try restating what the consultee has said to see if he accepts it or even recognizes it the way you put it.

Suggest readings that might be relevant. Tell the consultee what to look for in each reading. Make suggestions about things to do: look this up in the concordance, compare it with that, chart this, write down these observations and link them together in words, try organizing things this way, clarify that statement. Sometimes a person has a problem fairly well figured out, and yet either the way to organize it is not clear to him, or else he has it in a dense shorthand form that needs to be loosened up and have more signposts added.

The final point on the agenda is a final contract, a bargain as to what needs to be done next. The task must be definite and feasible, acceptable to the person who has to do the work. (It may sound good to us as consultants, but unless it sounds good to him, it will not get done.)

The best indicator that something is acceptable to a person is if he suggests it himself. The amount of work to be done also needs to take into account where we are in the workshop.

Another part of the contract is how to do the work: the method to be followed and the format. A consultee needs to know what his work should look like when he finishes it.

There is always the matter of a reasonable deadline and in the case of junior consultants, which of them the consultee should see next. Set a definite time and place for the next meeting. That lets a person know how much time he has to work in, which is a factor in the amount he has to do.

#### 6. Interpersonal Relations in Consulting

Consultant-consultee relationships are oriented toward motivation, on the theory that people can do anything if they want to badly enough. The problem is to help them want to by showing them on their own terms how important it is to them.

The question always comes up in this context, "Who motivates the motivator?" This is where inner resources are important. I find Christian faith is the key factor in this, because it gives a realistic and healthy attitude toward life. Because we have been forgiven, we know that the sky is the limit.

One thing that helps, because it's specific, is to keep in mind the history of things that you have done well. Make yourself a file folder. When something comes out right — which occasionally it does, you know — make a note of it and drop it in there. Then look through the folder every so often.

Be on your guard against negative ideas or apathy, which is still the most insidious of the seven deadly sins. I heard somebody once say, "If your wife wakes up in the morning saying negative things, throw her out of the house." You are not captive to thinking about how bad things are; that is your own choice and you have the option of replacing it with positive thoughts. "All that is true, all that is noble, all that is just and pure, all that is lovable and gracious, whatever is excellent and admirable — fill all your thoughts with these things." It works.

Besides habits that you develop yourself along this line, a good deal of helpful motivational reading exists. At the top of the list I put the Bible. There are other motivational books that you can read as well. Dip into them. Some will thrill you and others will turn you off because they are written by various kinds of people for various kinds of situations. Some people think motivational reading is a lot of nonsense, and some profit from it or are willing to try. In

general the people who actually help other people get going are not in the camp of those who look down on motivational reading. Try it.

Another part of our attitude toward consultees is just plain old acceptance, or love. We take people as they are and refuse to worry about what they should have been doing, or what kind of people they should be or even what they could be. If they feel bad, start from there. Accept your consultees the way they are and be enthusiastic about them; they should never feel on trial in your presence. Suppose you agree with somebody that he will work out such and such. He catches the flu, and other things happen, and he comes around in fear and trembling without having done everything. You have your choice of throwing the chair at him, or of starting with what he actually did do. Frequently it turns out that he did a little, but concludes he hasn't done anything. If you look at the little he did do, he may actually be a good deal farther along that he was. But it is up to you to find that little bit, which he doesn't think is there.

GOAL ORIENTED: Another part of our interpersonal relations involves goals, as distinguished from a general orientation toward motivation. We help people figure out where they are headed. None of us is sure most of the time just where he is headed, so that having somebody help figure it out is a service. Where a person is headed changes constantly. Fixity of purpose is a good thing as long as it is the fixity of purpose that an aircraft has, which though blown back and forth as it goes towards its destination, the goal-seeking activity of the navigator brings it in anyway. The aircraft heading at any moment is not necessarily where it should be headed five seconds from then. But that does not mean that its flight is not oriented toward its goal. I suppose we spend fifty or sixty percent of our time in consulting, showing people how to get from where they are to where they want to be. To help people figure out where they ought to be headed, they first have to know why they should be headed there.

One of the most helpful areas you can dip into for this is problem solving. A lot of our education is dedicated to teaching us how to do specific things like multiplying tow numbers or surveying a field. Very little is directed toward telling us when we ought to multiply two numbers or when a field is worth surveying. Problem solving means getting the individual skills that we already have hooked up in a useful way. The best book I know of on this is Polya's *How to solve it*. He gives systematic suggestions that plug in immediately in linguistics.

Another way in which you can help people toward a goal orientation is to help them calibrate themselves on where they stand at the moment. We all like to know how we are

doing. Show consultees what they have actually done. Don't inflate it; just let them know that they have gotten from here to there. Say it out loud.

Keep your interpersonal relation in this area. We don't try to play psychiatrist or marriage counselor; that is for experts. Sometimes, frankly, if a consultee is going through an emotional crisis, having something in his life that just plows right along is really helpful. It gives him something to retreat into, where he knows what the situation is. We can adjust his work load, of course, to keep things stable, and we want to take into account everything that we know about the situation; but we don't turn consultation into clinical therapy. If just keeping on is not helpful, we get professional help, and get it fast.

RAPPORT: To establish rapport with a person when we consult, the main thing to do is listen. Our job as consultant is not to do the analysis. We know from experience that the first problem brought up is rarely the really important one. If we start answering when we should still be listening, we may miss the main point.

A useful suggestion that often gets overlooked, especially by academic people, is this: maintain eye contact. Look at people. (This doesn't mean give them a glassy stare or hypnotize them; just be friendly and attentive.) And also make it a point to be enthusiastic about the people you're working with. So they have an unanalyzable morpheme; they're still great people.

#### 7. Putting Ideas Across

Every suggestion we make hits the consultee fresh. He Keeds help in assimilating it. Good ideas, like most other good things, need to be put across. There are four basic step in getting an idea across.

Point one is to get the consultee's attention. In the workshop context this means to get him wondering about things. Ask questions. The best consultant is the one who asks the most questions. Questions get him slightly off base from where he is so that he will listen to what we have to say. We also have to show enthusiasm for the idea we are presenting. This gets his interest if the idea is so good that we are all steamed up about it, maybe there's something in it for him.

The next thing is to demonstrate concretely how our idea could help him: not how it could help us if he would use your idea or how it would help SIL for this to be put into practice, or how it would help the academic world to have it worked out, but how it could help him. If he can't see to a certain extent -- not in detail, but at least a glimmer -- how it could help him,

then the idea isn't for him. You see, when people but ideas, they don't but them because they are old, standard ideas; they buy them out of hope. They hope that this way they can figure out something they haven't figured out already, Kuhn points out in his book *The nature of scientific revolutions* that it is the promise inherent in a new idea that determines its acceptance, not the fact that it has already been demonstrated to solve everything; because any idea that has solved everything leaves an intellectual cleanup job, not a challenge.

Process part of the data using your idea. Never process all of a person's data for him. Take two or three forms and show how it works there leaving the other three hundred for him to have the fun of working out. Show him how to do it until he can do it himself. The minute he's got the point, go on to something else.

The third point most people never realize. Any time we put up a new idea, intelligent people balk. There's a healthy reason for it. So phase three is overcoming their objections. They are putting themselves into the picture of this new idea and they don't see how they fit yet, so they ask pointed questions. If people don't object, but just nod assent, go on to something else fast; because that means they are not putting themselves into the picture, and you are wasting your time. Whenever they start coming back with, "Yes, but how about this?" it shows they are thinking.

This puts contrary statements into a different light than if we think that because someone disagrees with us he has us written off for not knowing what we are talking about. (There are people who feel that having brains means objecting to everything anyone else says. People like this are easy to find in the academic sphere, where approaching an idea critically can be taken to mean that no matter what the idea is one should knock it. This is not the meaning of critical thinking, because one of the possible outcomes of critical thinking is to accept something new.) But ordinarily when people raise objections they do it because they are serious about the idea, yet they can't quite visualize themselves living with it.

This has something to do with the way we answer them. At this stage the kind of answer that we give should be short, crisp, incisive. What we are trying to show is not all the ramifications, but simply the fact that there is an answer. We have seen the idea in action; we know it works; we tell what happened and go on to something else. People seem to go through a kind of psychological shift, so that at this stage — and only at this stage — what they want is assurance. Once they see that their objections can be taken care of, they tend not to care how. Later on, when they are committed to try the idea, we can go into the variations and possibilities involved in actually working it out; that is the production stage. It may also be that in the speculation phase, where we are getting their attention, that we talk about alternatives to arouse interest. But where they are seriously considering the idea, we

can side-track them from what they are really after, which is, "Is it safe for me to buy this idea?" Give them a concrete assurance that it is safe and based on something worth while.

The fourth state is to get a commitment. People who are considering an idea need to know for themselves that they have decided to try it.

Up to now, through the first three stages, you have been talking about your idea enthusiastically. (If you're not, either you don't understand it or maybe you're not sold on it yourself; in which case perhaps you should wait to bring it up.) But now the person you are presenting the idea to is the one who has to decide whether to us, it or not. That is his right. Unless you show him you respect that right, he will feel high pressured. You have to stop pushing.

In English, when we talk enthusiastically about something, we use final intonations frequently, going from a normal high to a normal low with a fade. At the time when a person is trying to make up his own mind, if we keep using that kind of intonation, he thinks we are pushing him. If we drop down to a detached medium-to-low intonation and lengthen our contours, it gives more of the idea that "I recognize that you are a responsible person, capable of making up your own mind. I want you to know that I'm satisfied with the idea, but really it is up to you whether you take it or not." This puts the ball in his arms, to carry or not to carry as he likes. When a person is making up his mind about an idea that you know will help him, take off the pressure and you will make it easy for him to look at it your way.

This decision results in a kind of verbal contract as to how to follow up the idea. Then we give people things to read that will explain the ideas further. We don't want to say, "Here, I've got a great idea for you. All you need to do is read twelve books and then you'll understand it." Rather, after they com to favor the general idea, then we can say, "Now there are more details on it in this book. This second book goes into some areas of it that we haven't touched on but that are relevant." At that point a person is willing to take it.

After a person has gone through the agony of buying an idea, it reassures him if we remind him that the choice was his, and that we think it was a good choice. This sounds minor, but it gives a push in the right direction that gets him moving.

Every new idea has to be put across separately. Just because a consultee picked up the last one we gave him does not mean he will pick up the next. We plan on going on through the process all over again. It doesn't take very long, in fact, we can spend too long putting an idea across. It may be that three words is all we need to convince him that it might do him

some good; but by the time we finish a half hour song and dance, he could have been off working on it.

The main idea that has to be put across it this: that the consultee had the capability of doing something really worth while. We have to keep him sold on this one thing. Most people do not believe that they have the ability to do something valuable.

Why is this so? I sometimes think there may be an imbalance in our Christian tradition, a wrong emphasis. We tend to focus on how bad things are. It always helps to emphasize the potential that God put into man and to show how to realize that potential, rather than undervaluing the doctrine of the image of God and misunderstanding the notion of Creation. Man is helpless and sinful, but that is fortunately less than the whole picture. It is the balance, not the mainspring.

Consultees also need to learn to think in big enough terms to do some good. Most people are afraid to think in terms of what actually can be done. They prefer to concentrate on what they already know they can do. It's sad when a person who is capable of understanding differential equations insists that there is nothing more to mathematics than arithmetic. You see, when people begin to think failure is normal, they also get accustomed to following the line of least resistance, which is death. So we must help people think on a large scale. This fear of thinking in terms adequate for the job can be gotten over, and anything we can do to help people over it pays off not just in the long run but right now.

### 8. Reading

With more and more being printed all the time it takes special skills to keep up. The primary reading skill is knowing what not to read. If as consultants we can help people on this, we save them a lot of time. Effective reading can be taught, and needs to be taught, because in our work intellectual integrity is important. We do not want to overlook anything that is really relevant. This applies in three areas. First, it applies in the language we are working on. We cover everything written on the language (branch libraries should be repositories of everything available on every language in the branch). Second, we must also know what has been written on related languages that might give a helpful idea. Third, we look at general theory. We are not longer interested in cataloguing alone; we need to know why a particular thing works, and we want to explain it in terms that are cross-culturally valid. Unless a person is willing to look around these three ways he will end up doubling the amount of work he has to do, and will fail in giving credit to what others have done

Beyond that, a person who reads meets ideas whose originators probably had no notion that they applied to his kind of problem. Part of the need to read for new thoughts is the general principle that we can't stand still. We are either learning more or we are going backward.

Reading has to be selective. Teach people never to read anything they can afford not to read. (Of course they must be very sure they can afford not to read it before they bypass it. You may know of some things written on their languages and related languages they cannot afford to miss.)

Selective reading is a three stage process. The first thing a person must do is to decide what it is he wants to know about. Have him focus just as sharply and narrowly as he can. Nobody can read a whole shelf, but anybody can read through a shelf for one particular thing. If we try to read to understand the field of linguistics, we go to sleep. But if we pick out topics we know we have to know about, and look for information on that alone, we end up knowing what we need to.

Second, the reader should skim anything that might possibly have anything to say about his topic. He should not decide beforehand that only certain articles and certain books can tell him what he wants. The range of sources might be surprising.

The first source he should go to is the consultant's suggestions. He can also look for likely titles while walking past the library shelves. Another source is the follow-your-nose principle, looking up works that have been cited in other works in footnotes or references. When one author cites somebody else, his reason for citing an article may not be as broad as the other man's reasons for writing it. Footnote chasing, because the footnotes help trace specific ideas, gives a much greater selectivity than just going by titles.

Bibliographies frequently tell a lot. Some bibliographies are guides to the literature; others are simple lists. Teach people to take advantage of these guided tours. The ERIC information retrieval system is a good source for papers and technical reports, especially those that are not quite ready for formal publication.

The last category of suggestions of what to skim is anything else that looks promising, for whatever reason — the color of the cover, or a glance over someone's shoulder. What people should skim is extremely broad; anything that might possibly help, no matter what the lead on it.

The first rule for learning how to skim is to turn the pages as fast as possible, nor more than ten seconds without turning a page. Before they try it, most people don't think they can get anything out of this. But the only thing they want to know when they turn the pages is

whether a page has anything on it that might be of direct interest. If it does not, they turn. Later they can do it in five seconds. They are not reading the book; they are scanning it. The specific things they are looking for will leap out of the page at them and they will recognize them immediately at this rate. In skimming also, tables of contents make it possible to skip entire chapters.

While skimming it is best to take no notes. When they hit something they want they can slow down and note the reference: the author, the title, the publication, the date, the pages of the publication, and then separate from that, the pages on which they found something. At that point they take any notes they like, going over those pages in whatever detail they wish, and to whatever depth. The more they stop and think about it the faster they will get through it, especially if they go through the mental activity of trying to connect what they see on the page with what they already know: How does this idea differ from so-and-so's idea? Is this a special instance of the principle of XYZ? The more skill they develop in associating ideas, the fewer notes they will ultimately have to take; they will recall the reference and what was in the reference.

What about people who read broadly — everything about everything? To do that they first have a number of precise points about which they are curious, perhaps widely spaced. They always keep a number of questions sizzling on the back burner in their minds. If one's whole curiosity is centered around one point, then he will be able to read selectively about that point, but may not remember much about anything else. If one is particularly concerned about one point, but also has a healthy curiosity about a number of other things, he will pick up a good deal about them as he goes; this is how to become a broad reader.

Consultants in general should be more curious than consultees, developing the urge to delve into things remote from the job they are working on now. Again, though, they should never, never read anything they can afford not to. People are always amazed by how much they can read once they get interested in something.

### 9. Improving Manuscripts

The work that we do on a manuscript is an important mode of communication in a workshop, especially the last half. The closer we get to the end, the less we rely on talking things over, and the more we rely on doodles and queries in the margins of manuscripts. As the workshop goes on, budget more and more time for doing this, shift your relative emphasis.

Only in a manuscript can we see the totality of a study. When we talk over a problem with a person the only things that come to our attention are the ones that one or the other thinks to bring up. There may be other factors that are important but don't happen to get mentioned. By the time we have gone over a complete manuscript a few times, these things get worked in to the point where we can see the whole. This is the reason for pushing on manuscripts.

GOALS: What do we want out of a manuscript? Firstof all we want clarity, clarity of expression, of organization, of thinking. It must be clear. If it is not clear to us as consultants, it will not be clear to someone who knows nothing about it but who might be helped greatly by it if he could only penetrate it. I have found it safe to assume that if it is not clear to us, it isn't clear to the person who is writing it either. In other words, the reason it is not clear on paper is because it is not yet clear in the mind of the person who is writing it.

The form of manuscripts comes up from the consultant's point of view. I recommend to everybody in a workshop that they start their manuscript by following the Linguistic Society of America style sheet to the letter. The reason I say this is not because they are all going to publish in Language, but simply because the LSA style sheet is the clearest and most explicit in the field of linguistics, and it is accessible in the bulletin of Language. Get people to follow it to the letter, details of punctuation and everything else. Then, after you decide where to send it, notice how that journal differs from the LSA style sheet. Most other journals have no published style sheet; we have to look at their articles and see how they are handled. At any points where they have no obvious differences, we stick with the LSA style sheet.

JOURNALS: Journals differ in the way language forms are cited, and the way glosses for those forms are cited. Language underlines the vernacular indicating that it is to be printed in italics, and the glosses are enclosed in single quotes with no punctuation intervening. in *IJAL* and Anthropological Linguistics the vernacular is in body type; either the reader is expected to recognize that it wasn't and English word that he just saw, or the vernacular forms are enclosed in slant lines. The gloss is underlined, indicating italics in *IJAL* and underlining in Anthropological Linguistics. Other journals do things in different ways.

References to the literature in many journals go in a list of references at the end. If should start on a separate sheet of the manuscript and be headed References. Then in the test of the manuscript, instead of giving a footnote to the reference, the author's last name and the year with no punctuation in between appear in parentheses: (Bloomfield 1933), or for a particular page (Bloomfield 1933.25). Doing it this way avoids breaking the reader's train of thought.

Footnotes are usually for statements that do not really belong in the text, never for part of the evidence or part of the argument. Alternative arguments might go in footnotes, but none of the main line development. In some journals all the references are given in footnotes.

The general organization of articles differs from one journal to another. Most linguistic journals expect the main point to be in the first paragraph, like a newspaper article, with the details following. The anthropologically oriented journals expect an introduction, then the body of the article, then a section usually labeled Conclusions or Summary at the end to sum things up. Language requires a short abstract, which is printed in small type ahead of the article. This has to be a true abstract, with nothing in the abstract that is not in the article: topic, main conclusions, theory, and perhaps approach, to allow the reader to decide whether this article is for him. In other journals the first paragraph is equivalent to an abstract.

Some journals print an outline or a set of headings and subheadings. Never assume that either of those devices lets the reader know where he is. The information that orients the reader has to be in the prose text itself. The only thing outlines and heading systems are good for is when he comes back and tries to find something he has already read; then they help him to get there faster.

Notice how each journal uses italic type, bold face type, and small capitals. In the manuscript italics is represented by a single underline, small caps by a double underline, and bold face by a wavy underline.

How do we decide which journal a study ought to be sent to? We try to match what a person is working on with a journal in which that subject or that treatment is going to be maximally acceptable to the people who need the information. If the problem constitutes a contribution to any particular theory, slant it toward one of the more theoretical journals: Language, Foundations of Language, Journal of Linguistics, or Lingua. If the person if bringing to light a fair quantity of data that are not available elsewhere — make even theoretical articles heavy on data — then try Anthropological Linguistics or Pacific Linguistics. Linguistics and IJAL take both things that are heavy on data the theoretical contributions that include sufficient data.

Some journals are more interested in comparative studies than in straight descriptions; *IJAL* runs about three of the first to five of the second. *Oceanic Linguistics* in this part of the world has a strong comparative interest, along with some theoretical and descriptively oriented things. Regional journals like the *Journal of Philippine Linguistics* get to specialists in Philippine languages and Malayo-Polynesian. (If someone gets hepatitis in the middle of a workshop and leaves behind something that is basically good yet not rounded off, throwing

it into a regional journal does not hide it from all except for the select few; regional journals still have worldwide circulation. Hold it over and do a good job on it later rather than submit halfway work.) Possibly both a regional form of a paper and a general form of it that emphasizes the theory or the methods can be prepared in some cases.

You might put all the findings of a workshop into a single monograph, as Longacre did in his final report to Health, Education, and Welfare. If you do, have the monograph planned before the workshop and be able to guarantee the quality of everything in it during the workshop; this can put considerable pressure on the consultants. Look into the financing of the monograph before you make any commitments about it: does the branch administration or the editor of the SIL monograph series pay for it? (Monographs which come out from *Pacific Linguistics* are funded through the Australian National University, but arrangements must be made with the editor ahead of time.) Don't get two publishers at once, by the way. Monographs to honor some prominent person are also possible, usually arranged through a university. If you get the articles from a workshop they will be ready on time because you work to a deadline there; but people outside the workshop who are asked to write rarely get anything in until after a year or so.

MANUSCRIPT COMMENTS: The way we write on manuscripts can be very helpful. I make it a point to write my comments right on the manuscript. It is a waste of time to give a person a neatly typed sheet with my comments, because he has to spend all his time finding where in his manuscript they apply. Put the comments right where they can do some good, except on the very final copy, where a little pen and ink work is all that is needed.

I seem to make three kinds of comments. Queries is the first kind, asking to have clarified anything that I do not understand. I usually try to tell what sort of information would clear it up. I ask about missing information, statements that are not backed up in a way that convinces me, points that could be viewed differently.

Another kind of comment that I make is a suggestion on how to say something in a way that might be clearer. We want to let the consultee decide on what really is the best way to say it, but offer him alternatives. He may come out with something totally different.

Occasionally I make corrections on misspelled words, punctuation, or grammar. Set a good pattern for punctuation and grammar and style and keep the standards high.

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### 10. Why Workshops?

STAGE OF WORK: Why consult in workshops? They are the biggest single advance in the history of SIL. Formerly consultation seemed to be for the purpose of vetoing publication. One sent in a manuscript to somebody five hundred miles away, and it came back with a few marks on it and a note saying, "I'm sorry, I don't think we'd better send this in." And that was that. There was little personal interaction in this kind of consulting, people never really learned what they should have done. The burden of proof was on the field worker constantly to show that he had something worth talking about and to show that it made sense.

Now we hold regular workshops where we try to have a lot of interaction between consultants and participants. Nowadays we assume that the field worker does know what he is doing, but we try to help him do a better job of it and maybe see things that he has missed and tidy it up. We also try to match our consultation to the critical points in his field experience so that we work at the right time on what he needs to know. Workshops also create an environment for getting things done. Ideas are shared back and forth at a furious rate. Workshops are really the one the job training phase of SIL. We assume that people learn enough linguistics in the courses that we can talk to them, but the real training is done in situations like this. This is better because in a situation like this a person is teachable, because we are all pulling together to get something done, and everybody is involved up to the ears. Also in a workshop we can make information accessible that a person in the tribe couldn't get his hands on.

Another thing about workshop is that it acts as a refresher to give people a new perspective on what they are doing and to feed them new ideas. We also test new ideas in the workshop; this is one reason we call them workshops, I think.

Another thing about a workshop is that we are able to push high standards. I speak again about publishability as standard, not as an end in itself, but because it assures that the result is going to be useful, and assures coverage. There is a temptation to write on a language without looking at the literature, either on the ideas, or on related languages, or on languages which have typologically similar characteristics.

We also help people develop a taste for good work habits, setting up and adjusting their own schedules, I talked earlier about the value of having the experience of reaching moderate goals successfully. This we can do in a workshop — a manuscript, a chart, a whole series of small goals that are very healthy for people.

Another result is in progression to the next area of the language to cover, choosing from the workshop those things there was no time to look into, and setting an estimate of what has to be done to make headway on it, and at what pace. Then the practice in writing and revision so that things will be clear affects many things outside the workshop.

A workshop gives a definite output, not just a hope of getting something out sometime. The purpose of this output is not public relations. Publications in this sense are a by-product. It would be immoral to take three months out of a field worker's life just so that he could turn out public relations materials. But it is well worth three months when a person learns something; we push the publication so that he is sure that he knows it.

At the same time we recognize the public relations value of what we do. First of all it helps us fulfill contractual commitments, the basis for our being where we are, which is important. It also keeps our hearing among linguists alive in such a way that when problems come up like orthographies, if we are the ones who have been publishing on a language, things will turn out in a way that is convenient for us. But if we have spent twenty years in the language without publishing anything on it, problems will be resolved on the basis of a quick opinion of somebody who doesn't really know the language; yet has a scholarly reputation; and it could be that we would have to go through costly orthography change just because we did not get our material out even though we knew it. These publications also help open new areas of service. All that is the rationale behind consulting in workshops rather than just consulting as the occasion arises.

### 11. Who Participates?

Now, what about organizing workshops? First of all, who participates?

STAGE OF WORK: I think new workers ought to get into a workshop just as soon as they can. Three months in the field is plenty before being in a workshop. Getting in at that critical time when a person is just discovering what being in a language means can make a difference in all his future work because workshops are the places where we set the pace. The new worker is motivated to learn at that time.

The second category is people who feel stuck. For this it doesn't matter if they have been in the tribe for two weeks or twenty years. If they are stuck, getting them into a workshop is the

This means that in setting up a workshop we cannot impose restrictions on what we will allow person to be stuck on before we let him into the workshop. We have to be willing to take all comers.

The other category is everybody else. Everyone in the field ought to be rotated into workshops on about a three year cycle, because in three years many get stale. And in three years the field has changed enough that everyone needs exposure to the new ideas it would help him to take advantage of.

NUMBER: A senior consultant ought to be able to handle up to about 15 people as a maximum. More than 15 people gives him too much consultation. If he is training junior consultants by consulting with them, take this into account. For junior consultants the number varies, usually each can handle up to five people, fewer for junior consultants who are breaking in and more with experience. As a rule of thumb, say for each senior consultant 15 and for each junior consultant four. (The reason for four instead of five is that the senior consultants are also consulting the junior consultants as part of their training.) I would rather operate 20 to 40 per cent under capacity than right at capacity, so that this is the absolute maximum.

SENIOR CONSULTANTS: For senior consultant we want people who have had graduate training at least to the master's lever and preferably the Ph.D. because of the importance of plugging into new ideas. He should have also had some training in consultation, both what we are doing right now and what you're learning by doing. In general consultants are made more often than born; and it takes effort to learn. Be sure that senior consultants have proved effective in working with people. A Ph.D. does not necessarily mean senior consultant in a workshop. See who people to go for advice, whether he is running a workshop at the time or not.

The senior consultant also meeds a certain amount of leadership and organizing ability. A workshop doesn't run itself. For this he has to have a positive attitude toward life in general and what he is doing in particular; and should have training and experience both in getting people to pull together and in putting ideas across. These two areas are critical for workshops. Management training is good for this.

The senior consultant should be chosen by the top branch administration, the director and executive committee. It can profitably be done in consultation of Kenneth Pike as Linguistic Coordinator. This is true whether you are dealing with consultants from within the branch or from outside the branch. The people who run the workshop you want to select at a very high

level because there is more involved than holding consultations. The senior consultant is responsible for the output of the whole workshop.

JUNIOR CONSULTANTS: It is best to have junior consultants who have some graduate training or teaching experience. They should be trained in consultation during the workshop. Part of that training is being consulted with, possibly the major part of the training. It also helps to have sessions like this one about working with people, what goes on in consultation, and workshop organization. In training people we push them in the direction of the kind of reading I have mentioned: organization and creativity in general.

It is the responsibility of the senior consultant to see that the junior consultants get adequate training. Some may already by trained, yet they may appreciate further training as they go for upgrading. Don't assume that just because a person has worked workshops, he has all the training he wants. Ask him.

Junior consultants should be chosen by the Branch Technical Studies Committee. They need to be acceptable to the senior consultants, to be sure that they can all work together. Again, they want to look for people who have good potential and people to whom one can go for advice.

We want to make it clear that just because a person is a junior consultant at one workshop and gets training there does not guarantee that he will be senior consultant at the next workshop. That could quickly result in having too many chiefs and too few linguists.

POTENTIAL CONSULTANTS: Getting people started has top priority; people from among the participants in the workshop who are not actually consulting but who, the next time around, could.

We look for people who express themselves with reasonable clarity, or at least are making progress. We want people who do not have to be told over and over about theoretical notions, people who are willing to read. Recommend graduate study to these people.

Concerning graduate studies, a period put in on graduate study is more likely to put a person's work ahead than behind. Look at the New Testaments that have been translated and the time they took; the record favors graduate study.

The reasons for this are that graduate studies give a person a perspective on his work which he can't get from the middle of it. It also gives him a wider experience in knowing what will and won't work, and why, so that he wastes less time in his own language work. Also, the pressures of a graduate program are likely to help him develop effective work habits.

We want people in graduate studies just as early as they can do it. Generally speaking they ought to get started before 30 and preferably before 25. Those who have been on the field have an advantage in graduate school because of their work (field work).

Now, for a person to go to graduate school, his application and all his recommendations should be in to several universities by February 1 of the year in which he plans to enter. (Hardly anybody enters graduate school in mid term.) The best universities often take a person without a B.A. in graduate school on probation if he has publications and first rate recommendations.

The recommendations should be from someone that the faculty knows, because they always evaluate the person who recommends before they know how to read his recommendations. Senior consultants can usually give recommendations on the basis of their own experience of three months with the person during a workshop.

Never, never give an overenthusiastic recommendation. It does three bad things. First, it puts the field worker into a situation he cannot cope with. Second, it saddles the university with a mediocre student, and will be like crying, "Wolf, wolf!" for the next person. Third, it damages the recommender's reputation for good judgment.

What do graduate schools assess people on? Primarily the recommendations if they come from people they know. Another factor is proven ability, for which a handful of reprints enclosed with the application speaks like nothing else. Another factor is definiteness of purpose. One of the biggest factors is the probably impact of the person twenty years from now in teaching and research. Given two students of equal ability, one who plans to teach and the other who plans to do research, the one who plans to teach may get preference.

Before the branch releases someone for a Ph.D. program, the top administration ought to do a couple of things. First of all, they ought to get the opinion of a Ph.D. about this person's chances of success, an idea of how he thinks he will stack up. The branch administration will make up their own minds, but they need this input.

Second, the branch must decide before a person goes what to do with him after he gets back so that he knows what to look forward to. One thing that they have to guarantee him is tribal time. (There is Corporation legislation on this.) Then they have to figure out how to keep him profitably engaged from three to six months per year, and no more, on branch work. If three of those months are spent teaching in SIL, that is part of the time which isn't his own. If he can count on time for getting his own tribal work done he will be happier than if he is

uncertain whether he will ever be able to finish. We have lost enough people over this that we cannot afford to play around on that point.

By 'profitably engaged', I mean that he has to feel that what the administration wants him to do is worth doing. This doesn't mean that we never ask a Ph.D. to run the dining hall during conference, as long as that is not the characteristic thing he has to look forward to.

Another thing to plan ahead of time is to set up things so that when a person gets back into his tribe he has opportunity to argue with other people from time to time so that he can keep from going stale. A base situation is not too good for this because everybody else is up to his ears in his own work, but working in a workshop is ideal.

Support is always easier to get for a Ph.D. program than it is for an M.A. program. People who go for an M.A. usually have to pay their own way. People who go for a Ph.D. usually get their way paid for them. There are fellowships for the best applicants. People with marketable skills can count on teaching assistantships. Teaching at an SIL school increases one's commercial value. There are SIL staff scholarships for people who have taught at the schools a certain amount. You don't get any scholarships unless you ask for them; but it costs nothing to ask.

Don't encourage people to waste time on an inferior program, even though it costs less. If the program is worth sending a person to, count on the Lord to provide the money one way or another.

## 12. Branch Consulting Needs

PERSONNEL: what does a branch need by way of consultants? Kenneth Pike has estimated that to keep things moving forward a branch needs one Ph.D. for every ten tribes, available three to six months out of the year not counting furlough. This excludes any Ph.D. who is full time in administration. We also want one or two non-Ph.D. consultants for every ten tribes in addition to that — people with the Master's or people who are thinking of degree programs, who are able to help out in the consultation work but don't necessarily have all of their study done yet.

WORKSHOPS: What about workshops? I think a sensible rule of thumb is one full-scale linguistic workshop per base per year. Spend the rest of the year with translation workshops, but keep the workshops going all the time. By full scale I mean at least twelve participants. A linguistic workshop can run concurrently with a translation workshop or a literacy workshop provided there is no crossing of personnel except to listen to each other's lectures.

Regular workshops should never be too closely restricted in their topic. If we announce a phonology workshop we fail to give the senior consultant and the participant the option of sitting down and deciding, as we did at the beginning of this workshop, whether phonology is what the participant really needs to work on or not. We exclude people who may need help. As consultant we must be ready to take on anything at all. It is all right to have a strong emphasis in a workshop as long as there is an assurance that, for example, in a discourse workshop like this Bill Hall can work on phonology.

A word on this in connection with grants: one that does not give leeway to do this might not be worth the money. As someone put it, speaking of foundations, "Never take money to do something you wouldn't do anyway, with or without the grant." If the grant is restrictive, perhaps the workshop should be funded in some other way. Ad hoc workshops in specialized topics can be set up, of course, on demand and on short notice.

We count on each branch contributing to the corporation's growth. This is usually phrased negatively: "We're going to get robbed next year," is what they always say. But sending trained people elsewhere is a factor in corporation growth. If we budget for growth, it is not a loss. The rate to plan for is up to five per cent of your consultant force per year called upon for work elsewhere. This is investment in the future. One thing that it means is that somewhere between every thirteen and twenty years you will have a hundred per cent turnover in your consultant crew. Plan for it.

Another question that comes up in relation to our total SIL program is the resignation rate among consultants. I don't think it is higher than in the rest of the group, but it is much more visible. There are, however, factors that are peculiar to consultants: first, not being free to carry on a tribal program. Second, the administration may not know what to do with a highly trained consultant. Perhaps a director has no college degree, but he's a great director, and in comes somebody with his Ph.D. diploma. The resulting standoff is hard on everybody. Or the administrator may not know what the consultant is good for. That is why I emphasize working things out before a person goes on a graduate program; the director may be in a bind, but the effect may be that the director stays while the consultant goes. If the director can twist a consultant's arm just like anybody else's, then everybody will be happy.

Another factor is that the branch sometimes permits people to get training when they are not really promising, just because they want a degree. Lifetime upon return to the field is about two years, because the branch administration cannot use these people. (Sometimes I think the branch administration may have been at fault in not creating ways to use people, or in deciding ahead of time that a person cannot work out without giving his a chance to show himself. Bur more often the shoe is on the other foot.)

Then there are the usual causes of mortality throughout the organization — education of teenagers, responsibilities at home, policy disagreements, emotional and physical disabilities — these are normal.

## 13. Planning a Workshop

CONSULTANTS AND PHYSICAL FACILITIES: How do we go about setting up a workshop? First of all, we want to schedule consultants and physical facilities three to five years ahead of a major workshop. It helps to remind whoever handles the scheduling every year, say on January 2 that we have made this schedule so he doesn't forget and schedule something else. We do it this far ahead so that if we need to import a consultant we can start planning, especially if we want to get an aspect of the workshop funded by grants. A grant proposal should be submitted a year ahead of the workshop, and the specific points in it should be blocked out two years ahead of the workshop. For routine workshops, start the planning for consultants and physical facilities at least two years ahead.

PARTICIPANTS: Worry about the participants a year and a half ahead. Make sure that everybody lined up for a workshop has a concordance. We can adjust who the participants are going to be right up to the last minute. Be sure to include wives. To do this we have to make sure there is a good nursery and house help. Make sure lecture hours are convenient for housekeeping. Give wives special encouragement, and have the director assign them definitely to do the work not just to help their husbands. Most of them don't realize how good they are; most of their husbands don't either.

GUESTS: Next to planning for a workshop is the matter of guests. We are very glad to have them. If any prominent linguist is passing through, but him a round trip ticket from the capital, roll out the red carpet, then pump him for all he is worth when he gets there.

In workshops that have grant funding there may be what is known in foundationese as "the project consultant". This is not one of the workshop consultants, but a known scholar who is commissioned by the foundation to look in on the workshop.

SCHEDULE: What about internal scheduling: Twelve to thirteen weeks is best -- long enough to get substantial work done, and short enough that nobody has a chance to drag his heels. It can be done in eight to ten week, that is awfully rushed.

I like a daily seminar, one hour by the clock. It exposes everybody to new ideas, so that we don't have to handle them all in consultation. It also gives a more complete picture of ideas,

because if we try to handle everything tutorially in consultation, we miss different points with different people. And maybe those are the points they ought to hear.

In seminars I go over many topics. It is good to budget up to 20 per cent of the time on topics that nobody in the workshop is working on, to stimulate the next round of work by thinking ahead.

I also feel that a series on stewardship and time management is worth including. It helps people do their own planning, not only in the workshop but in the future also.

At the end give each person a half hour to explain what he has done, then give everyone the rest of the hour to ask him about the parts of it that interest them. I find that this is the most exciting part of the workshop.

There is a change in emphasis of consultation through a workshop. On a thirteen week basis it helps to take the first three weeks to just explore, asking people, "What would you like to work on? Have you thought about working on this?" We get them reading on a wide range. We and they want to know what will hurt them the most not to know, to look over the field and select an appropriate problem that's worthy of their time.

The next three weeks, 3 through 6, are for analysis: blocking things out, making charts, diagrams, tables, lists. We try to get hypotheses states, but don't worry about connecting up the hypotheses yet. Then we try to verify each or its alternatives. This is the stage when we insist on at least ten examples of anything a person says. If we have ten examples a flaw in the analysis shows up. Except the case of rare phenomena that we can't get ten examples of, with fewer examples some bugs get by. We continue to push people to read in their problem areas so that they don't miss anything that might help them. The aim is to block out the field and to probe different kinds of solutions.

Weeks 7 to 9 are for organizing. Here we are trying to see how hypotheses fit together. We encourage people to outline things, and we have them write prose. We keep them reading things they had not thought of before and things that did not occur to you the first ten times around, and the encourage them to continue analysis as points come up; but now the major push is not to cover as much new ground as possible, but to fit together what they have already worked out, to see the thing as a whole and fit it in to the rest of the grammar, They are trying to work toward coherency, trying to build a whole.

Weeks 10 to 12 are for polishing. Frankly, this is when people learn the most. It is when they commit themselves to definite statements that they really find what is going on. It never fails.

The techniques at this time go beyond outlining and writing to criticizing every statement that is made, pushing ideas to the limit, looking for consistency or inconsistency, At this point we rewrite for clarity, to help the poor reader who has to read it cold. This is also the stage in which we have people scan huge masses of data for verification. By the time they have reached this stage in writing (but not before), they can put on earphones and listen to tapes, and anything that disagrees with the analysis they have written down will cause them to sit bolt upright.

Discrepancies at this stage are not the kind that force us to throw out everything we have done. They are more like the tuning of an engine; we are adjusting our conclusions.

What we want at this stage is a logically coherent analysis that relates to a large corpus, a clear statement of it, and an acceptable manuscript. By the end of this period, which is a week before the end of the workshop, they have a manuscript that can be sent off to the editor.

The last week is windup week. Occasionally, even on the final typing, there are things that have to be adjusted, either by retyping a page, or by correcting with pen and ink. Leave breathing space for it. We want to make sure that the workshop has no leftovers. By the last day of the workshop we want all the manuscripts to be in the mail. You see, it's bad for a person to work for three months with nothing to show for it — psychologically unhealthy. During this last few weeks this puts a heavy load on the consultants. We work sometimes night and day with manuscripts to keep ahead of everybody. If not, then they are stuck at the end. This is the real crunch in running a workshop.

The other thing to do at the end of a workshop is leave. I make it a point to leave the day after the announced end of the workshop, because I've found out that if people know they can't fudge or dawdle, they don't. If we announce that we will be around for another two weeks to clean things up, all we do is extend panic for another two weeks. If you finish cleanly, people know when they can feel free to leave.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT: To provide an environment in which people can get work done, every workshop needs an administrative assistant. He should be appointed by the branch administration; he may be the base administrator. The person who is carrying this load should not plan to participate in the workshop full time. Make this clear ahead of time.

SUPPORT FUNCTIONS: There are other support functions — a buyer, somebody to handle finances, maintenance help — not only base maintenance, but typewriters and tape recorders need to be kept going. Transportation, communication, and clinic services are essential.

Every senior consultant should have a secretary and dictation equipment. The secretary needs immediate access to a Ditto or mimeograph machine. If we count on going through publications channels, we can't get some things out when we need them.

Participants need typing help. We never promise that there will be typing help, but if we can get help for them, we do. This gets critical near the end. Some people need more help than others. Most probably handle their own typing, and what they really need is a back rubber.

GROUP ACTIVITIES: Group activities are important. It helps if the devotional program is geared to the pace of the workshop rather than to the needs of the base, because the rhythm of the activity on the base as a whole is slower than the rhythm of the workshop. There are advantages, of course, to tying in with the base devotional program, but there are also disadvantages. I don't know what the solution is.

Recreation is also important. We need at least one excursion to get people off the base.

INFORMANT ACTIVITIES: Part of the informants' devotional program should probably be separate from the field worker's program, and part of it should be joined, so that we are not forcing informants to fit into our frame of thinking for everything. They worry about different things, and they enjoy different things; but we want to keep the group together also.

In recreation I notice a nice mix here most of the time, especially at the swimming hole.

The typing class for informants has been a success. Most field workers are gratified to learn how much their informants are capable of and how helpful they can be when trained.

Training creative writing during a workshop may solve some literature problems. It can work with good group enthusiasm among the informants at a workshop, even though it might be hard to do in some other environment.

In some places classes in the national language for informants can be important. The principle is to make the informant's stay at the base worth while to him, not just to us.

PUBLIC RELATIONS: With the concentration of foreigners we assemble in a workshop, unless we have a good local public relations program, the whole area will wonder what is going on, and their first guess may be that we can't be up to any good. Good public relations is worth while the effort all the way around.

LIBRARY: With good library facilities we can think. While planning workshops three to five years in advance we can send out orders for most of the books we know we will need a

year ahead. Last minute orders should be sent out air parcel post. Make sure you have a broader coverage of the recent literature than you think you will need.

We have Xerox copies of a stack of unpublished materials in this workshop. Alert people who are in a university or a university town to keep you up to date. Semi-published things come out on microforms, fairly up to the minute. They require a reader.

#### 14. Finances

LOCAL: What does it cost to hold a workshop? The money spent is essentially branch and individual money for living expenses, travel, and informant expenses and travel. We may have to make an outlay for meeting facilities like bigger blackboards, an overhead projector, or a microform reader, It costs money to get the books that you need, budget for it.

OUTSIDE: For outside money, as from grants, first think in terms of borrowing consultants from other branches. With a suitable grant for research they might not cost the branch anything. On the other hand, if we plan three to five years ahead, we can budget from branch funds to bring a person out.

What a grant covers depends on who gives it. It should cover consultant support and travel. Some foundations allow for family travel and some do not. If it pays for participant travel, estimate an average cost for round trip from the allocation.

Some foundations will give per diem support for participants, that is living expenses while not in the usual place of residence (the tribe). This not only help individuals, but also lightens the branch financial picture.

Informant travel funds may be easier to get than participant travel funds, and also informant compensation at the going wage rate. If you pay compensation to informants, base it on the wage rate because it has to be uniform and fairly distributed from their point of view or there will be hard feelings.

Budget for supplies, things run off on the Ditto, xeroxing, letters sent out in connection with the grant, cables, and postage to circulate things that are mimeographed. Special articles and gooks that could not be gotten otherwise, may be handled from the grant if they are written into it.

A grant proposal has to be phrased as a clear cut research project, usually connected with linguistic theory. It must be a feasible research project. The proposal is reviewed by people who ask, "Given what they want, is it worth doing, and could I do the same job on their

budget if I know what they know?". If the budget is too lot the reviewer may recommend asking for more, because no foundation wants a job half done.

You need either a known Principal Investigator (foundationese for what I have called the Senior Consultant here in workshop terms) or well known Project Consultant who comes out to review the project for the foundation, with time and travel covered by the budget.

The project has to be within the mandate of the funding agency, especially those that are set up by law. Some are allowed to support basic research, others only applied research, some in one area, some in another. The same job looks different to different foundations because of this, and they have to be able to see how it falls within their area.

The proposal should be prepared and submitted mainly by the Senior Consultant who plans to run the workshop, written in Foundationese, a dialect that most of us don't understand. It requires a lot of information from the branch administration.

The proposal is submitted either through a university or through SIL; not as from a private individual, because most grants are made to institutions. If it goes through SIL, then it should be submitted through Pike and Watters, and it would be looked over well ahead of time by Don Lyon, who keeps his finger on grants in general.

Keep separate accounts for all project expenditures so that everything clearly budgeted for in the grant goes through them, not someone's personal account. At the end of the workshop the branch bills the grantee institution for expenditures that they have made in connection with the project. It is up to the branch to provide the itemized accounting support to back it up — the mileage basis for transportation charges, receipts, all kinds of primary documentation to be kept for audit. The granting agency has the right to audit the books that have to do with the workshop, so that the branch would be able to prove that any penny they say was spent for a thing actually was spent for it. So make every expenditure over someone's signature; and keep all receipts and vouchers on file. I recommend a high school text on basic accounting for consultants who need to know what facts and figures are important.

# Aspects of Linguistic Consultation

Ivan Lowe

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## 1. Interpersonal

The interpersonal aspect is by far the most important aspect of consulting. Once you get that right, most other things come out right. It is far, far more important than the academic aspect.

What we need to aim for is for the consultant and consultee to work together as a team, with mutual confidence and trust in each other, mutual understanding. The consultee needs to feel motivated and enthusiastic (and not forced to do his project to fulfill a requirement). So make sure that you have a warm, positive, interpersonal relationship.

## 1.1 For the consultant himself (herself)

- (1) Show yourself as a real person with values and feelings. Let your image be genuine. All of us have strengths; all of us have weaknesses. Be confident of your strengths. Admit your faults, never pose as perfect and don't expect yourself to be perfect. Accept yourself for what you are, but all the time try to improve yourself in the areas where you lack (but do it without straining). Don't devalue yourself as a person, don't devalue your efforts at helping another person. Trust the Lord to work. Accept yourself especially when things go wrong. Be vulnerable, then people will be prepared to be vulnerable too. Then they won't put up their defenses.
- (11) Don't be afraid to admit your mistakes. Above all don't stubbornly hang on to a hypothesis if it obviously isn't going to work. All that does is to waste everyone's time and it can be emotionally tough as well. Far better to admit you've been wrong and start afresh. Learn to be relaxed about your mistakes. Always, without

fail, admit where you have been wrong. We are human, and humans make mistakes.

(iii) Be quick to say you are sorry if you have done anything wrong or have offended.

## 1.2 In the consultant's relationship to the consultee

- (i) Accept your consultee for who he is and for what he is. Find something in him (her) that you can genuinely respect. Do everything you can to encourage him.
- (ii) In the beginning stages, work hard to establish a relationship of mutual confidence between the consultee and yourself. Your consultee needs to know that you

hear him understand him take him seriously

- (iii) Let him talk. Don't bewilder him with a continuous stream of questions, especially if you sense that he is having difficulty either understanding your questions, or answering them. Carefully pitch your questions at a level that he will find reasonably easy both to understand and to answer. Your questions should neither be too hard (in which he will be bewildered), nor too easy (in which case he may feel he's been talked down to or insulted.)
- (iv) Be sensitive to any signs of either fear or bewilderment. If you think he is scared, you might go so far as to ask 'Do you find it scary my asking you all these questions?)
- (v) Prize and value his achievements, both non-linguistic and linguistic. Especially on linguistic matters, show him the worthwhileness of what he has done. Many people need to be told that what they are doing is worthwhile, and often too. Thus someone who speaks the language well, does a clear piece of writing, has a good hypothesis, shows initiative in finding literature, good understanding in reading, deserves a compliment. Make your compliments genuine, don't flatter.
- (vi) Encourage and motivate him to genuine but attainable standards of excellence.

  Get him to see what he is capable of

- (vii) Trust him (her) to have a sense of responsibility for getting something done. Most people are responsible and want to get things done, what they lack may be motivation, encouragement, technical method, and sometimes sheer physical strength. In any case, where progress is not what you would expect, try to find out what the lack is and see what you can do to remedy it. But try to find out in a gentle, sensitive sort of way and let him know that you are with him. Don't assume he's irresponsible; that could cause him to devalue himself, or to fight you.
- (viii) Trust him (her) especially when things go wrong. On such occasions, make sure your consultee knows you are with him (her). Stay alongside, be gentle, be ready to help all you can Never tear him (her) off a strip. Sometimes things do go wrong; it's part of the battle and nothing to be ashamed of. But if your consultee knows that he can count on your help and support when things do go wrong, then they will not hesitate to come to you. They won't hide from you, which is just about the worst thing that could happen.
- (ix) In the beginning stages, respect diffidence. Don't mistake diffidence for ignorance. The consultee may not feel able to tell you all you want to know because he (she) doesn't feel that there is an adequate level of confidence between you yet so that he (she) can. Or the consultee may not be able to tell you because he (she) hasn't got the words to express what he wants to say. They might be unsure about linguistic terminology. Or afraid of correction. You can either try to say it for him (her), in which case you must invite your consultee to correct you; or you can ask him (her) to think about it and tell you in a couple of days' time. Genuinely affirm what they do and say; this often helps in solving the diffidence problem.
- (x) Listen to his ideas. If they look workable, try to develop them rather than suggest more of your own. Most people identify more easily with their own ideas and are much more likely to work on their ideas rather than someone else's. (Even if those ideas might sound half baked to you!)

## 1.3 Some don'ts

(i) Avoid like the plague anything that even remotely resembles sarcasm, or an attitude of superiority, pulling of rank, or an attack on the person.

- (ii) Don't 'postmortemise'. Never say, "I told you so. You should have listened to me in the first place!" Simply pick them up where they are, and do your best from there. The past is over and gone, you can't do anything about it anymore. Concentrate on what you can do now, on the present. There's plenty you can do now.
- (iii) Don't ever resort to 'one-upmanship'. You may have proved your consultee wrong, but that has not solved his problem. Your job is to help him solve his problem, not to prove him wrong or prove yourself right.
- (iv) Avoid words with a negative value loading when referring either to the consultee or to anything he (she) has done. Thus, words like bad, dumb, stupid, should be regarded as taboo.
- (v) Avoid any 'put downs' or anything that could be interpreted as a put down.
- (vi) Don't say anything that is or could be interpreted as linguistic or spiritual blackmail. Thus statements like the following are simply taboo: \*"If you don't do as I say, your paper will never get published", or "Your people will never learn to read", or "Your people will never get the Word of God."
- (vii) Never belittle any piece of work that a consultee has done. It can be devastating to a consultee who has worked hard on something for a week, if a consultant tells him that what he has done is useless or irrelevant. Try and understand it, try to find some way of fitting it into the total picture, even if it doesn't look important to you at the moment.
- (viii) If you and the consultee have agreed on a general plan of work (and you always should), don't renege on the plan. It is good for the consultant and consultee to discuss the plan occasionally and revise it in the light of the way things have developed. That is wise. On the other hand, it is very bad for the consultant to depart unilaterally from an agreed plan. That shows a lack of integrity and it could easily destroy the interpersonal relationship between you. The fact that the consultant has lost interest in the problem isn't a good enough reason for him to renege.

## 1.4 Some special problems

#### 1.4.1 Hypothesis rejection.

What do you do with a consultee who rejects all your hypotheses? (out of hand, without giving them a thorough going-over.)

Try to get across to him what you are doing. Try to explain to him what the purpose of having hypotheses is, i.e., to get you going on useful lines of investigation. Explain to him how you got your hypotheses. (i.e., your underlying theme which generates those hypotheses) If he doesn't like your hypotheses, encourage him to think up hypotheses on his own.

#### 1.4.2 Perfectionism.

What do you do with a consultee who is a perfectionist?

Try to get him to see the total picture, the necessity and desirability of seeing that the whole picture gets filled in, and the undesirability of just getting all the details right in a small part of the picture, when the price is that you know hardly anything about the rest of the picture.

## 2. With regard to the linguistic problem you are tackling

You and your consultee are engaged in a cooperative effort to get a linguistic problem solved. For the cooperation to work, both of you have to be clear as to what your respective roles are. To be specific:

The consultee should be clear as to what part he should play in the total enterprise and what part you should play. He expects to make his contribution to the whole project, and the bigger his contribution, the better; he doesn't want you to do it for him. On the other hand, he is expecting a contribution from you too. The consultant's contribution will usually be in the following areas:

- (i) Help in *defining the problem* to be solved (and perhaps help in *narrowing its* scope so that the project can be completed in the allotted time span.)
- (ii) Directions on how to go about solving particular problems, and if necessary, specific detailed working with data on particular problems. (This may include help in understanding what kinds of data are needed, and help in organising and

- displaying data to the best advantage. Devising the right kinds of charts may be included in this.)
- (iii) Help in picking out and clarifying the components of a solution and how they relate to each other
- (iv) Suggestions regarding *alternative* solutions that need to be considered and perhaps discussed.
- (v) Help in writing the description of a solution
- (vi) Help in discussing and evaluating a solution and finding ways of improving it. (This is often related to (iii)). Improving a solution may also include generalising it so that it applies to a larger body of data, or to related phenomena.
- (vii) Suggestions as to what is to be done with the final write up. The kind of input that a consultant needs to give to solving a linguistic problem depends a great deal on both the relative abilities of the consultant and consultee, and on their personalities. A very able consultee may need practically no help in areas (ii) (iii) and (iv) or even in (i) but even he can profitably use input in area (v). Most consultees, however, can profit by input in all the five areas above, provided it is given in the right way. (And most consultants will be pleasantly surprised how much positive help you can be in areas (i) and (iii) which are often not thought of as being areas needing attention at all).

## 2.1 Arriving at a suitable problem for investigation

How do we arrive at a suitable problem for investigation? It is important to come to a good decision because the consultee is going to spend three months working hard on it. So the problem need to be something he can really commit himself to.

The following considerations are important:

- (i) The consultant can prepare himself by reading up about the area linguistics beforehand, and seeing what problems need solving.
- (ii) He can ask people what sort of things are hurting them, and what things they would like to know about their languages. If you come up with a comon area of interest for several people in the same workshop so much the better, because then

- you can count on their sharing and interaction as an important factor in moving you ahead.
- (iii) There must be adequate data both in kind and in quantity. And for papers involving any theory there need to be adequate library resources.
- (iv) Some projects are only possible with good language helper input. Especially in semantics and discourse. There is so much that a good native language helper can make clear that an expat can only guess at helplessly. And in any situation where there is a lack of data, a language helper is a must. Phonology also cannot be done properly without a language helper.
- (v) The consultee should heed the advice: 'Don't run before you can walk.' For example if you don't know how the tone works in your language and there is a chance that some of your tense/aspect distinctions are marked by tone, then a sound tonal analysis comes before any serious attempt at the discourse. The alternative is frustration and waste of time.

## 2.2 Starting on a problem.

## 2.2.1 When you first start on a problem, do the following.

- (i) Be sure that both sides know what the problem is that you are discussing. Spend time defining the problem, write out a description of the problem. Such time spent is not wasted. On the other hand, a great deal of time can be wasted if either the consultant or the consultee don't know what the problem is. Time can also be wasted if the consultee's perception of the problem is greatly different from that of the consultant. In such a situation there is a lot of talking at cross purposes, and frustration and conflict often result.
- (ii) On the other hand, if you are both clear in your minds and agreed upon what the problem is, this automatically gives you a framework for understanding each other. Moreover, a clear idea as to what the problem is, will make it much easier to set realistic goals, and this will result in a more constructive use of your time. So a lot depends on defining your problem well.
- (III) Try and understand what the problem is by asking questions. When you've asked a question, pause and give the consultee time to think and formulate an answer. Then listen hard and see if you can understand the answer. If you think you

understand, try and reword what he said and ask the consultee if he will accept your version - if he (she) doesn't, correct your version until he (she) does accept it

- (iv) If you don't think you understand, ask questions of your consultee until you do think you understand and then try to express your version and see if it is accepted. Obviously, this means that the consultee will do a lot of talking and you will do a lot of listening. This is the right way round for two reasons; first, by talking about his problem, the consultee actually gets things clarified in his own mind, and second, the consultant is clearly not in a position to offer any helpful advice until he understood the problem himself.
- (v) Listen carefully to what he says; interrupt only when there is a good reason. A consultant needs constantly to realize that there is a lot he needs to learn about a problem before he can say very much, and a lot of that learning comes from listening to the consultee. The consultee himself will also find that as he tries to express himself, his own understanding will improve. The consultant should continually affirm that he is hearing what the consultee is saying. The consultant often helps both himself and the consultee by paraphrasing what the consultee has said. When the consultant can paraphrase the consultee's statement of the problem, then he may be ready to suggest steps towards a solution.
- (vi) Whatever you do, don't barge in and make all sorts of assertions and suggest all sorts of solutions before you have listened carefully and thoroughly to what the consultee has to say. Because if you do barge in like that, you are showing a grave lack of respect for your consultee.

#### 2.2.2 When you have understood the problem, do the following:

- (i) First, ask yourself (silently) if you have ever come across a problem like it before, and if you have, ask yourself how you solved it and what the solution looked like. That method of solution might well be applicable to the consultee's problem, and the solution to the new problem might look like the solution to the old one. It's a good starting point to assume this, although you must be prepared to change if it turns out your first attempts don't work..
- (ii) Second, check with your consultee to see that he has an adequate amount of data to solve the problem with. For instance, some discourse problems need a fair amount of text (50-100 pages) before you can expect a reliable solution. If the

consultee has a very inadequate amount of data, his first constructive step towards the solution is to get more data. You can probably help him by giving him pointers on the kind of data he needs, given the problem he's trying to solve. If the amount of data he has is only barely adequate, he should divide his time between attempting a provisional solution and gathering more data. It is dangerous to rely on a 'solution' based on insufficient data.

- (iii) If it turns out that your consultee has enough data of the right kind, ask him how far he has come in his efforts to solve the problem. If he hasn't really started on it, ask him if he has any ideas on how to solve the problem. If he already has come some way towards a solution, try to help him develop it, work through some extra data with his solution, and work together to see what the next step will be. By all means, make suggestions of your own, based on your view of what the method should or what the solution should look like. But above all, develop his efforts at a solution if he has already made some efforts. It makes a tremendous positive difference to a consultee's morale and motivation if he sees that what he has already done is useful and that you are affirming it.
- (iv) If the consultee's attempted solution is "wrong" in your judgment, don't tell him straight out that it's wrong, but rather work through some data with him, using the 'faulty solution', and show how the solution and the data don't fit. Then discuss how you might modify the statement of the solution so that the data does fit the solution.
- (v) 'Faulty solutions' are often 'wrong' because the way they are stated is inaccurate, and not because the basic idea behind them is bad. The inaccuracy means that the consultant finds it hard to understand what the consultee has stated in his solution, and so he thinks it is 'wrong'. The inaccuracy may lie in certain terms whose meaning is unclear or it may be that the consultee has claimed more for his solution than the data warrants. Try by gentle questioning and discussion to find out the meanings of these unclear terms and the extent to which the solution is applicable. Don't be afraid to explain what you are trying to do at this point say, "Look, I think there is something good about your solution but there are things in it that I don't understand. Please explain the following things . . . Please help me to understand so that I can help you". (You can say this with complete genuineness)
- (vi) If, however, it turns out that your consultee has plenty of data but has not made any progress towards a solution, consider the following:

- If you have solved a problem like it before, think back and try to remember how you solved it and what the final solution looked like and make suggestions accordingly.
- If you haven't solved a problem like it before, but you have read about it, try and backtrack and try the procedure of the last paragraph.
- If you have neither solved a problem like it before, nor have you read about it, ask for help from someone more experienced, either for a solution or for a reading reference.
- -- If, however, you can't find any help from any source, don't give up. Try and organize language data round the problem and look for any patterns and regularities in the data. Then look for causes for these regularities. Another source of input in this situation is the consultee's gut feeling on what the language is doing and what he/she wants to know. Putting these into words can get you to a useful starting point, and from this you may be able to develop a strategy. This method may work provided the consultee speaks the language well; otherwise it is of doubtful value.

In last two cases, it may take one or two sessions before you have determined what the problem is, got the data ready and have some hypotheses as to how the solution should go.

## 2.3 Moving ahead

Once you have understood the problem, and you have some hypotheses as to how the solution should be, the next step is to discuss possible strategies as to how the consultee should proceed in examining the hypotheses. That is, he will need to gather data and organise his data so that he will be able to see how the hypotheses hold up. He will need to see whether the hypotheses hold up in all of his data or whether some hypotheses will have to be reworded so that certain kinds of data which look to be exceptions, will in fact fit. Make tentative agreements on roughly how much data should be examined (or charted), what kinds of charts should be used. If you can hazard some guesses as to what the solutions might look like, it might be useful to say so, but make sure that your hearer knows that it's only a tentative guess and not to set too much store upon it.. (Otherwise he might agonize for days over one of your mistaken guesses.)

Make sure before the end of a consultation session, that the consultee knows how to proceed, and understands your recommendations.

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Always encourage your consultee to think and to suggest his own hypotheses. After all, it doesn't matter where the hypotheses come from, as long as the problem gets solved.

#### 2.4 Consultation sessions

Consultation sessions should be scheduled to start at a definite time and finish at a definite time. Between an hour to an hour and a half is about right for most people. Be sure you finish at the time scheduled,; don't let it drag on forever. Except in very exceptional circumstances, the law of diminishing returns catches up with you after a couple of hours.

By all means schedule a short check-in time of 10 to 15 minutes, say one or two days after a main consultation session. The purpose of this is to make sure that the consultee has understood your instructions and is moving ahead. A lot of valuable time is lost in workshops through people being stuck for days on end, often unnecessarily.

When you close any main consultation session (i.e., any session that's not just a quick check-in), schedule a time for the next consultation session. This time may be modified at the next short check-in time, but in general there should not be more than a week between main consultation sessions.

## 3. Organization and scheduling

Successful linguistic analysis depends a lot on good organization and good scheduling. This means that:

- (i) There needs to be realistic overall goals which extend over the whole time period allotted for the analysis (i.e., the workshop or what have you).
- (ii) Each individual consultation session needs to be well organised and efficient.

## 3.1 On goal setting

Long-range goal setting is important to the success of a language analysis. If someone just sits down to "work on the language" for a specified period of time (say a month), he rarely spends that time as profitably as he could. However, if realistic long-range goals are set and one works to meet those goals, one achieves a much better result, both in quality and quantity.

Goals should be set which are reasonable in terms of the amount of data that is available, the consultee's speaking ability in the language, and the amount of time that can be set aside to work on the language at this time.

A consultant can help a consultee set good goals. He should take the following points into consideration as he discusses goals with his consultee.

- (i) Find out what his aims and goals are if they are too low, try to encourage him to go higher, showing him how he can do it and why it's worthwhile to go higher.
- (ii) Define aims and goals clearly, make sure he knows what you expect of him and also what he can expect of you.
- (iii) Make sure the goals are realistically 'do-able' and that he knows why they are necessary.
- (iv) Make sure that certain essentials things are not unintentionally omitted or avoided.
- (v) Goals should always include a write-up to be finished by the end of the period allotted for the analysis, so that not only is there a permanent record of the work done for both the consultee and colleagues who could use the information but the actual work of writing-up does a great deal towards clarifying things in the consultee's mind. A bunch of charts and rough notes not written up is of little use to anybody, and the consultee himself may not understand them a few months later.

## 4. On writing and drafts

## 4.1 First drafts

Far better understanding of the analysis is invariably obtained if a first draft write-up is completed about halfway through the period of time set aside for the language analysis. The first draft is a tool to organize your knowledge, cut down your mess level and clarify your thinking. Once completed, one uses the first draft as a stepping stone towards an improved analysis.

The consultee may need quite a bit of help from the consultant if he is to get his first draft finished on time and get the clarifications done on it. Experience has shown that if the

first draft is not completed by somewhere between the 50% and the 60% point in the time scale of the period allotted for the analysis, there will not be sufficient time to do the clarification needed, and the consultee will miss out largely on the benefits of doing the analysis.

Usually if first drafts are not finished on time, it is because the author is too late in starting the writing-up. People are hesitant in starting a write-up because they feel they don't know enough about the problem to justify writing anything up. You can help them in the following ways:

- (1) Assure them that the first draft is a tool to organize your knowledge and cut down your mess level so that you can think through the problem clearly and build on the first draft towards a more definitive analysis. A first draft is definitely not meant to be an exhaustive compendium of knowledge on a topic. People who postpone the writing of a first draft often reach the point where things have got into such a mess that they never start writing. Often when we set out to write a first draft, we know that there are enormous gaps in our knowledge and therefore we are hesitant and intimidated about starting. In fact, that is a good time to start because by setting down what we do know on paper, we organize our knowledge and pinpoint the areas where we still need to do further work and fill in our knowledge.
- (11) Furthermore, as we set down on paper what we know, we see the relationships of the various bits of our knowledge to each other. Understanding how a language works isn't just a matter of knowing a lot of facts, but it is at least as much a matter of knowing how the various facts relate to each other.
- (iii) For instance, once you set out all the partial solutions of your phonology problem, you might see that the same rule turns up in slightly different forms in three different places in your paper. A slight rewrite would enable you to write one rule instead of three, which is a big simplification. But until you had written it up and cleaned up the unnecessary mess and complication, it is unlikely that you would have seen the simpler solution.
- (iv) So we learn and understand as we write. That is why we should write our first drafts about halfway through, and why it is a serious mistake to wait till "we know everything" before we start writing.

## 4.2 Getting started on that first draft.

Here is a useful way to break the ice and get started on that first draft:

Work with your consultee to make an outline, i.e. like a provisional table of contents, of what he knows. This outline should fill, at most, one page. Then he can write his paper, following this outline. Another helpful approach which can be used (either instead of an outline or as well as an outline) is to write an abstract of what he knows, again not more than page, and then write the paper following the abstract. I often find it helpful to use both approaches together.

Insist on an outline even though your consultee may say that "my mind doesn't work that way." In fact, it is usually such people that especially need an outline, because it is very probable that they have real difficulty in organizing their thoughts systematically. The point is that if someone cannot organize their thoughts in an outline, they will not be able to organize their thoughts in an extended write-up either. Such people need an outline in the worst possible way, and they will also need your help in making one. If they write without an outline, it will take them many days longer, and the end result will be very confused and not very useful to anybody. (I speak from hard experience.)

#### 4.2.1 Why some people find it hard to break the Ice

Some people like to have things nicely bundled up and tidy. It should not be difficult to encourage such people to write things up.

However, there are people who are comfortable with a mess and some even prefer it that way. To such, you need to continually put before them the advantages of getting something written up — it will be a lot clearer in their own minds, and it will be a jumping-off point for further understanding.

For people who are comfortable with a mess, getting out of the mess can be very uncomfortable, because writing-up involves examination and committal, and both of these things are uncomfortable. Often people feel like this:

'There are so many old bits of paper that I've put to one side that I really don't want to mess with again'

The fact of the matter is that some of those bits of paper contain information that is vital to your analysis. Others, however are just plain 'chaff' and deserve no more respect than

that. We need to decide to take the good on board, and to jettison the bad. Or we could decide to ignore the lot and take the risk. But we need to decide now.

It is uncomfortable to examine your analysis, and to have to struggle to express it in a clear way. It is also uncomfortable to have to commit ourselves — to accept this and reject that. (Sometimes what we reject might be 'an old friend'! But as an escape from this you might relegate the old friend to a footnote. At least there it won't be lost.))

It is much more comfortable to leave our doubts and obscurities buried in the mess. Illegible and inaccessible scribble is safe because no one can get at it. (but don't forget, you can't get at it either!)

However, once you write it up, people will be able to criticise it and you may get flak. We must remember that it is only through examination and committal that there is progress towards clarity and understanding. And all of us need input from others so that our blind spots are covered, and we can do our best.

#### 4.2.2 How can we encourage people to start writing?

It is so important to get started on that first draft on time. How can we help people to decide to start?

- (i) First show them that help is available. There are now procedures that work. Procedures in outlining and in wording. Work with them on outlining, and on wording. This isn't something impossible. It can be done. Do all you can to assure them that they can do it. Make them feel safe.
- (ii) Second, show them the advantages of writing. Everyone needs two or three (or even four) drafts to come out with a good clear insightful solution. (The first draft is bound to be confused, everyone's is.)
- (iii) Third, the worst thing that can possibly happen is that they will fail, and even that is by no means the end of the world. But if you succeed, it pays off handsomely.

## 4.3 After the first draft, what then?

Once the first draft has been completed, further progress can be made in the following way. Examine the first draft carefully for:

(1) places where there is insufficient data to support the conclusions claimed.

- (ii) places where there are unclear statements. Sometimes it is difficult for a reader to see what these statements mean, sometimes these statements can be understood in more than one way, sometimes a statement will apparently contradict a statement previously made.
- (iii) places where there is unclear terminology or inappropriate or non-standard terminology.

One then works to improve the analysis by providing further data where needed, by rewriting statements that are unclear, and by either changing unclear terminology so that it conforms to standard usage or by defining new terminology. This now results in a clarified first draft.

Once the project has passed the first draft stage, clarity and accuracy need to be borne constantly in mind. Because of this the consultant needs to hold things delicately in balance.

On the one hand, the consultant must still remember never to stubbornly hold onto an invalid hypothesis. That simply wastes time emotional energy and helps no one.

On the other hand, if the consultant really feels that the consultee has missed something out of his analysis, or has done something incorrectly, he needs to be firm but loving in his stance. In that sort of situation, being a 'yes-man' helps nobody. Both the consultant and the consultee need to work constructively and cooperatively towards the best solution. However, always remember that the object of the exercise is not to prove that something or someone is wrong, but to find out what is right.

# 5. More on attacking a linguistic problem in consultation

(This section is specially for consultants, but others may find it useful for their own work as well)

## 5.1 On ways of understanding the problem

Ask your consultee to explain his problem. Then listen long and hard. Try your best just to listen, and do not interrupt unless it's absolutely necessary. At this stage, your job is to understand, not to criticize. You are not in a position to give useful advice or useful criticism until you have understood quite a bit about the problem.

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Encourage your consultee by helping him put words to his statements when he is having difficulty in expressing himself. Be gentle in the way you do this, not assertive. (Be careful not to put words into his mouth because that can be exasperating to people. Most people hate someone else saying something for them when it's at the tip of their tongue) If there are long pauses, try to keep things moving by asking him suitable leading questions (but never loaded questions.) However, be sensitive to short pauses, when the consultee is just trying to gather his thoughts before he can continue. Never interrupt or say anything at such points.

Increase your own understanding by asking him questions of clarification. When you do so, ask the questions with the attitude of a learner who wants to learn. Tell him that there are things that you don't understand and that you want to understand so that you can help.

Make sure that both you and your consultee know that you are not in the 'schoolteacher mode' where the teacher knows or thinks he knows the answer and is asking the question with the sole object of getting the pupil to produce the answer that the teacher wants. Many adults find the schoolteacher mode threatening and demeaning when they are at the receiving end. A consultee who feels like that would simply close up and refuse to communicate.

As your understanding increases, try to define the problem and work towards the core of the problem with the consultee's help. Then address the core of the problem, trying to understand that core and working out a methodology for solving it. Don't try random skirmishes unless you are really desperate. Aim to scratch where it itches; don't just scratch. Random scratching may literally only inflame and irritate. (It may take several sessions until you get to the core of the problem, with quite a bit of data-gathering and analysis in-between.)

## 5.2 On the role of questions in consulting

Much of the art of consulting consists in asking questions. Asking questions makes a partner out of your consultee Telling him the answer makes him a pupil or an inferior - even a 'victim'. There is a big difference in the interpersonal relationships of these two situations.

Learn to ask questions in a gentle, tasteful way. Learn to ask the kind of questions that are easy to understand (although such questions may at times be quite difficult to answer.)

Often it takes a real effort to word a question that is easy to understand, but it's well

worth the trouble. Sloppy questions can frustrate and confuse, and are of doubtful value. Only use them if you can't possibly do any better.

Have a genuine attitude when you ask a question. You ask the question because you really want to know; not because it's a backhanded way of ramming something down the consultee's throat. (There may be times when you have to tell the consultee that you really do want to know, and that you are not operating in a coercive mode.)

As a general rule of thumb, ask *content questions*, rather than yes/no questions. (Yes/no questions can be threatening, and moreover many situations cannot be covered by yes/no questions because they are not yes/no situations.) Content questions will produce *information* which an alert consultant can relate to the problem he is trying to understand

Learn to ask questions for different purposes at different times, thus:

- (i) Use questions to clarify anything you don't understand. In the beginning stages especially, there'll be lots of things you don't understand. Use questions.
- (ii) Put your hypotheses in the form of questions. They look less threatening that way, in the form of questions. Be sparing in using assertion to present your hypotheses, because if your assertion proves to be wrong, you will feel emotionally attached to it and want to defend it with your last drop of blood. Also some consultees can find an assertion very threatening.
- (iii) If you think you have a good solution to a problem, put it in the form of a question. Say: "Could it be that such and such...?" This puts the onus on the consultee to decide, and if he says, "No, it couldn't", he doesn't have to be in a conflict situation to say it. whereas, if you assert that "such and such" is a solution, and he says "No", immediately, seeds of conflict can be sown.

#### 5.2.1 Different degrees of focus of questions at different stages of a project

Sometimes it is not appreciated that we need to have different degrees of focus, and to focus on different kinds of things at the different stages in a project.

When you have just started on a problem, your questions must of necessity be quite general because you don't know much about the problem, and in that sort of situation the consultant needs first and foremost to get a good, general, overall picture.

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However, as you understand the problem better, you need to try to focus your questions more and more onto the details of the problem. Use your questions as probes to find out how the details fit in, but at the same time, always keep the broad, overall picture in mind. Use questions to find out if you have the right parameters and the domains over which the solution applies, etc.

At a still later stage, you will have a nearly coherent picture as to what the solution should look like. Ask the kind of question that will fill in the holes in the picture. Remember that while you can make very legitimate guesses at what the holes in the picture should fill in with, and your guess may well be correct, in actual fact you won't know that your guess is correct until you have asked the question and checked it against data.

#### 5.2.2 On avoiding loaded questions

A loaded question is a question that obviously expects only one answer, and is therefore often embarrassing to the one who is to answer. A loaded question is bad because it does not leave the options open, it forces the hearer along one track, and puts him on the spot. It puts him in a conflict situation if he has to contradict or refute you.

Avoid loaded questions. Work towards the situation when he knows that you won't ask him a loaded question and when he knows that you have nothing up your sleeve.

#### 5.3 On alternatives

Try alternative hypotheses. At the very least, an alternative hypothesis will throw extra light on a problem — and in some cases it may fit better than the original.

Look at the problem in a different way Thus for instance, some discourse problems may be difficult to handle if you only look at participants but will be much easier to handle if you look at the roles that they play. Just a slight shift in viewpoint may throw lots of new light on a problem. Similarly, looking at reasons rather than causes may solve some problems in connectives.

If there are many independent variables all working together simultaneously, try to separate out the effect of each before considering them all together. In other words, keep all variables except one constant, and study what happens when just this one variable varies (analogy of cake or soup recipe) Then repeat for the other variables.

## 5.4 On relationships within the solution

Help the consultee see the relationships between the various parts of his solution. One very important part of learning and understanding is seeing relationships. Often a beginner keeps on discovering things until he has a great mass of unrelated facts. This really isn't knowledge, and it certainly isn't understanding. It's much more likely to be confusion.

Moreover, seeing the right relationships is important in setting out an argument. A compendium of unrelated facts is not an argument. But once we see the relationships, we can work towards a logical, step-by-step argument. You can begin to investigate relationships by making an outline, because an outline is the simplest possible way of laying out the relationships between the various parts of a field of knowledge. (A chart is a more complex way).

As a rough rule of thumb, try and relate like things together. In other words, try and group like things under one rubric. (Simple everyday examples of when we do this include grouping together the allophones of one phoneme, or grouping together the allomorphs of one morpheme, etc.) You might call this operation, "joining".

Note that both splitting and joining are useful mental operations in analysis. When we split, we emphasize the difference between two (or more) entities. When we join, we emphasize the similarity between two (or more) entities. They are useful ways of looking at the same data from different viewpoints.

To be a good analyst, you need to be both a splitter and a joiner. Some of us are naturally more inclined to do one thing rather than the other, i.e. to split rather than join, or vice versa. What we need to do is to deliberately practise the thing that we are less inclined to do, until we can do that naturally and well. Let's get away from the immature attitude that we must be either splitters or joiners!

## 5.5 On circular arguments

Check to see that you are not arguing in a circle.

## 5.6 On visualizing the final solution

Try and visualize what the final solution must look like if at all possible. This perception may change as you understand the problem and the data better.

# 6. Some dreadful misconceptions which hinder good consultation and learning

1) \*A consultant's job is to find out what's wrong with a consultee's analysis.

COMMENT: Never was a statement further from the truth. A consultant's job is to find out what's *right* with a consultee's analysis and help him develop it further. Or to work with and alongside the consultee to get the best possible solution

2) \*A consultant is there to give the consultee the solution.

COMMENT: He isn't, and couldn't anyway because only the consultee knows the language. The consultant can, however, offer suggestions as to how the solution should go, check the consultee's work, work alongside him and encourage, act as a sounding board.

3) \*All the bright ideas must come from the consultant.

COMMENT: Bright ideas should come from both sides. And the consultee should be encouraged to put forward his own bright ideas. The more that come from him, the better. One of the facts of life is that the consultee is much more likely to own an idea that came from him than one that came from somewhere else.

4) \*It is a negative reflection on the ability of the consultee if he has to have help from a consultant.

COMMENT: This is untrue In fact, most research in the scientific world is done by people cooperating with each other. And ability to get help when you need it and to profit by it, is a sign of a good researcher.

5 \*If a consultee can prove a consultant wrong, that's a point in the consultee's favour. It proves that the consultee is good and the consultant dumb.

COMMENT: Notice, however, that we are no further ahead in getting the solution. Research is cooperation; not scoring points off your partner.

6) \*If either the consultant or consultee has a hypothesis, he must defend it to the death.

COMMENT: The best scientists in the world get about 80-85% of their hypotheses wrong. A hypothesis is just a stepping-stone towards the solution, and if it doesn't

help you to the final solution, discard it and find another one. (But understand what you are throwing away first.)

7) \*Getting a mountain of miscellaneous, unorganized hunches is what research is all about.

COMMENT: Although in the beginning stages, such brainstorming is very useful, the time rapidly comes when the 'mess level' becomes so high that further progress becomes impossible. At this point, the compendium of hunches becomes about as useful as an unstructured word list with no grammatical statement is to learning to speak a language.

\*Writing up one's analysis is no more than a high-school English grammar exercise and therefore demeaning.

COMMENT: Writing up one's analysis is an essential, indispensable step in our struggle to understand. This is the experience of all scientists. It is a highly skilled and worthwhile endeavor.

## 7. Problem solving

## 7.1 Determine the problem.

Try and spell it out. This may take several attempts and the description of your problem may change as you learn more. Knowing what you want to solve is an important part of getting the answer. Ascertain your resources — whether you have enough text, paradigms, access to language helper, access to bibliography, etc.

## 7.2 Getting started

Two very important questions that Sir Isaiah Berlin asks, are:

- 1. If you had a solution to the problem, what would it look like?
- Everything is like something, what is this like?

These apply both to the total problem, and to subproblems. They are useful questions to ask at all stages.

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When you first start, it may be necessary to start skirmishing around, just getting some data and playing around with it to see where you go. But as you begin to define the problem better, continually ask yourself, what does this data, this partial solution have to do with the problem I'm trying to solve, i.e. concentrate and zero in on the problem.

If different parts of your solution look similar, try to be precise about:

- I. How they are the same.
- 2. How they are different.

Both of these questions need answering.

## 7.3 In the beginning stages

Young ideas are like tender plants; don't stomp on them or they'll die. Redlighting is taboo at this stage. Try to develop and encourage (if you are consulting).

Write a first draft after about a month to organize things and reduce the mess level. In checking a first draft as a consultant, don't worry about too many details at this juncture. Read, looking for essential correctness, and for a sense of direction of where to go next. Only eliminate what is obviously phoney. On the other hand, obscurities in expression often result from lack of understanding, and reducing the obscurities will improve understanding.

## 7.4 In the intermediate stages

Look for alternative hypotheses; consider counterexamples. Also apply your tentative solution to an increasing corpus of data, and modify your hypotheses accordingly so they fit. Always bend the hypothesis to fit the data — never the other way round. It is essential to consider counterexamples and alternative hypotheses. Every time you do it, it strengthens your understanding of what the real truth is.

Beware of the trap of just sticking to a single hypothesis, that can sometimes lead you up a narrow tube so that you can't see anything else.

Try to turn the problem inside out, asking different questions. That often reveals real insights, extra insights (e.g. cohesion).

When you are reading a semi-final draft (like a second draft in a workshop), the first question to ask is: "Is the analysis basically sound?"

(i) Clearly if the analysis is unsound, we need to examine hypotheses to see where they don't fit, look at the data that isn't accounted for, and try to account for it. (And remember in this kind of activity that if a hypothesis fits a lot of the data, say 50% or more, it must have quite a bit of "essential correctness" to it. So modify it but don't throw it out or else you'll have to account for the 50% or so of the data that the old hypothesis did account for.

If you have a solution that has lots of 'or's' in it, you've probably missed a significant generalization somewhere. Beware of *hidden* 'or's' too.

(ii) But if the analysis is basically sound, then your approach as a consultant must be fundamentally different. Supposing that the analysis is basically sound, but there are some sections that are quite unclear, even apparently incoherent. Ask yourself: "What is he really trying to say?" Usually the best attitude to adopt is that he is a reasonable person and has something valid in mind but has difficulty in getting it said

In this situation, work with your consultee on getting what he wants to say said in the best possible way. Constantly affirm and assure him that this is what you are trying to do. This makes a lot of difference to his self image and to his image of you. It can improve the cooperation between you a great deal.

## 7.5 In the final stages

The analysis needs to be tested so that it will be able to withstand the harsh light of day. It needs to be:

- (i) watertight logically, i.e. no holes in the reasoning, no contradictions, fully consistent.
- (ii) cover a representative data sample of the language, not just a selection of data examples just to prove your point, but also a fair consideration of the whole field of relevant data, including counterexamples.
- (iii) terminology needs to be standard, and your reader should never have to guess at what you mean by any term you use.

## 7.6 The description

The description needs to be:

(i) clear (no obscurities), terms clearly defined, charts properly labelled, examples well explained in having clear glosses and an easily recoverable free translation, a well-defined context and a clear statement on what the example is meant to illustrate.

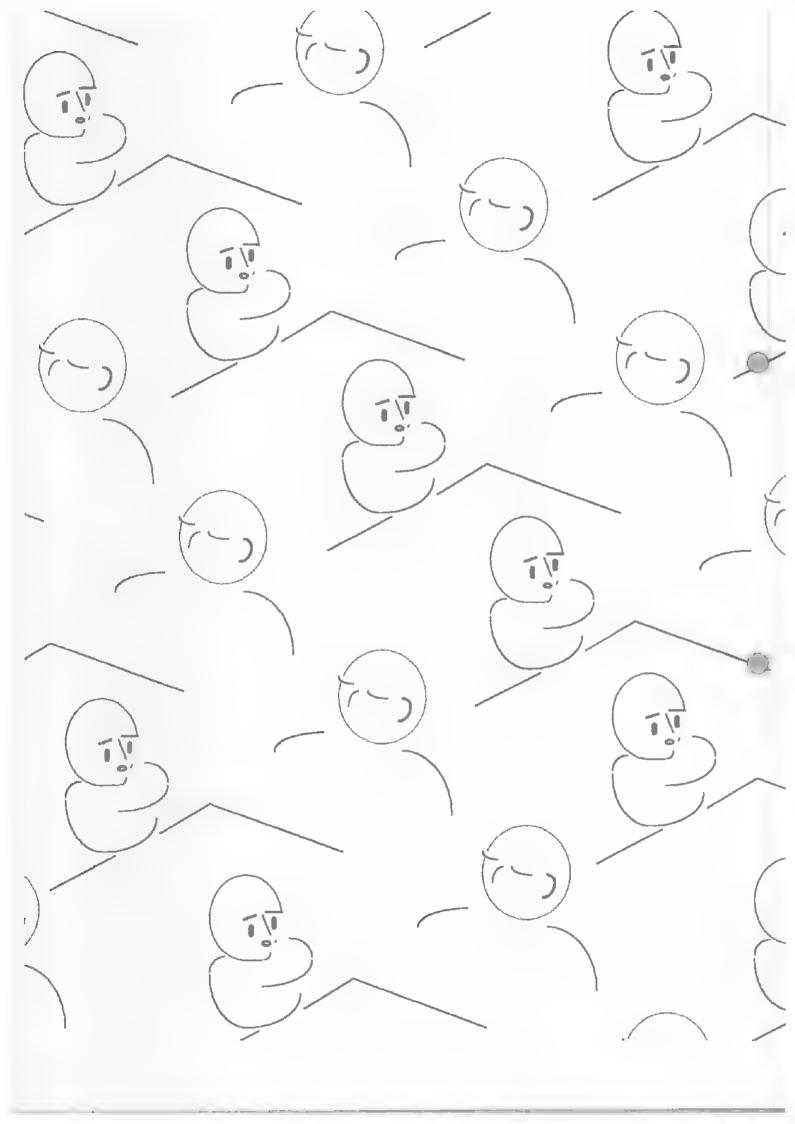
If an example is a long one, a clause-by-clause match by numbers between the vernacular and the free translation adds a lot to the clarity. Also capitalizing key morphemes in the vernacular and the gloss is helpful too.

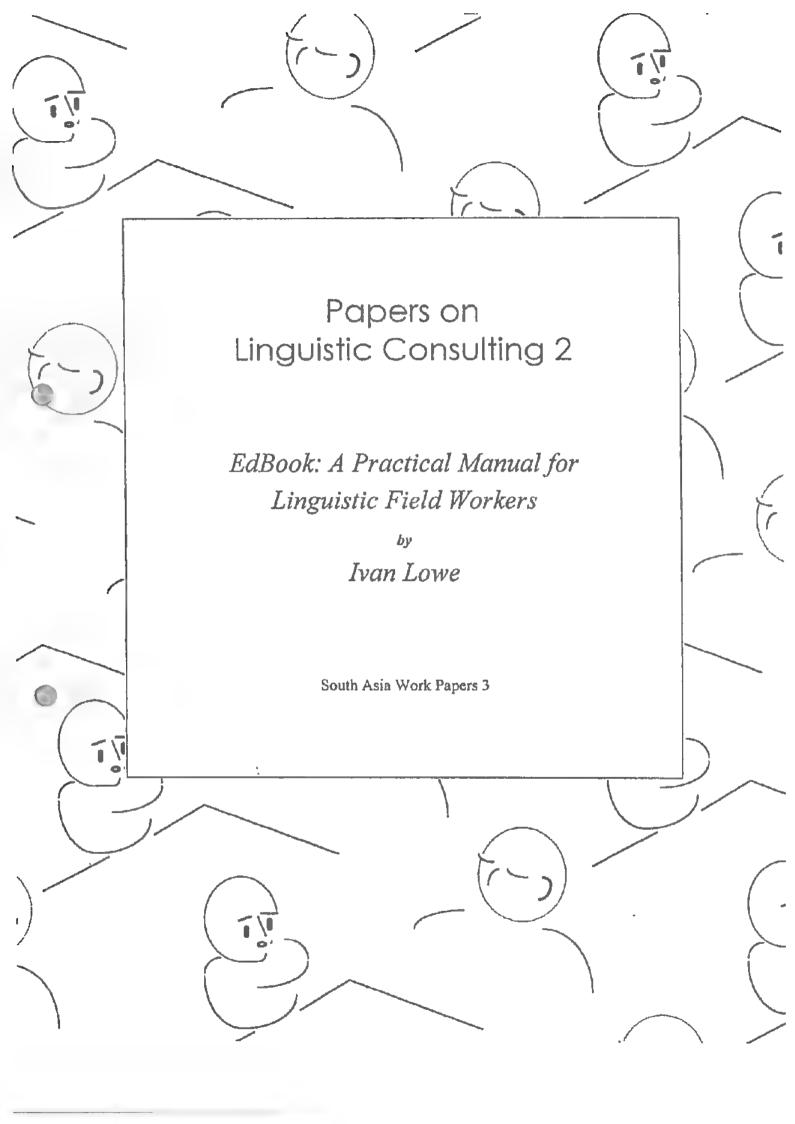
Be explicit, avoid vague generalities. Keep sentences short.

- (ii) concise (no wordiness, no redundancy, no waffle)
- (iii) faithful, i.e. truly tell the real state of affairs.

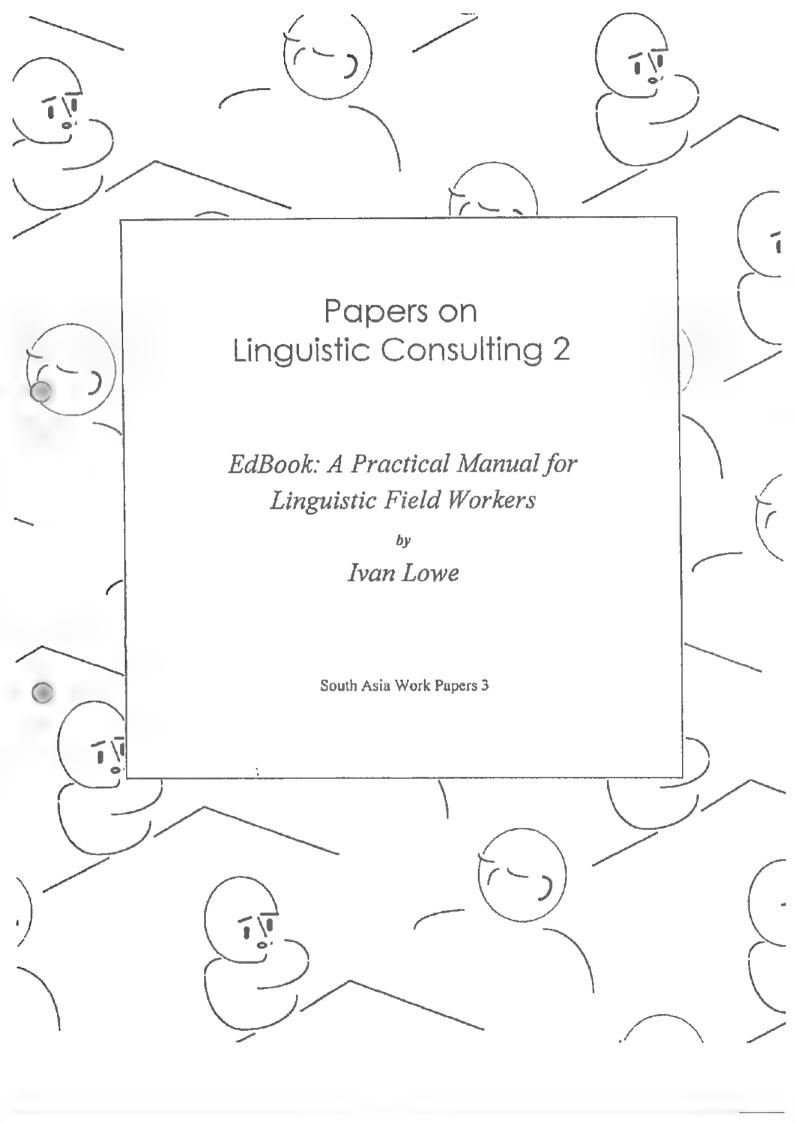
In addition, the final draft of the paper should relate the investigation that has been undertaken to similar investigations and to relevant general theory. Every editor wants to know if you know your bibliography.













# South Asia Work Papers 3

# Papers on Linguistic Consulting 2

EdBook: A Practical Manual for

Linguistic Field Workers

by

Ivan Lowe

South Asia Work Papers is an occasional publication of the South Asia Group, designed to facilitate the exchange of ideas among field linguists working in South Asia. Papers appropriate for publication in this series include data papers, papers which exemplify the application of various analytic approaches to languages of the area, papers that address descriptive, typological and comparative issues as well as technical helps in the process of moving from data through analysis to description and publication.

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Correspondence:

South Asia Office Horsleys Green High Wycombe, Bucks HP14 3XL England

# About the Volume . . .

A number of papers aimed at assisting would-be linguistic consultants in gaining effectiveness as stimulators and encouragers have been circulating through private channels, some for many years. A seminar for linguistic consultant training held at the University of North Dakota session of the Summer Institute of Linguistics during the summers of 1992 and 1993 provided the occasion for reviewing these resources and adding to them in areas that needed more detailed treatment from the standpoint of linguistic consulting.

The health of organized field research in linguistics depends upon two major factors: 1) the stimulation of the literature (library resources) and fellow workers in the field and 2) the timely publication of the results of field research in a form that makes the findings clear and accessible to one's colleagues. Editing is an important facet of linguistic consulting and Ivan Lowe's *EdBook* aims to help linguistic consultants improve their performance in this area.

This is a statement based upon the extensive personal experience of one of SIL's more active International Linguistic Consultants. It has intensely practical goals in mind. By making them available in this form we hope to benefit those who have the desire and the opportunity to encourage and stimulate their colleagues through linguistic consultation.

Austin Hale

Alice Davis



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# EdBook: A Practical Manual for Linguistic Field Workers

#### Ivan Lowe

## Introduction

### Why this manual was written.

It has been my experience on numerous linguistic workshops that SIL folks know their languages well but may have great difficulty in expressing what they know. Especially is this true when it comes to expressing it on paper. This is a pity because

- (1) We lose the chance to clarify our informal analyses which already exist in our heads by writing -- so we can't build on what we do know.
- (2) Our colleagues lose the advantage of being able to share what we know. Likewise, we can't share with them. We lose a great deal this way.

Diffidence, the lack of confidence in our own writing ability, obviously makes it difficult for us to start and makes us take a lot longer than necessary to write something up even when we do get started. Confidence will come from knowing how to do it - and this manual is meant to be a help in that direction.

Writing a clear paper isn't just a matter of getting the grammar right and using the right vocabulary. It entails understanding of what you are writing about as well. There is a very healthy relationship between good writing and good understanding of the language data. In other words, as you come to write about your language well, your understanding of what goes on in the language increases. Anyone who has been through the process agrees but we can't convince you that it really is that way unless you try. It's a case of 'taste and see.'

This manual in written in the belief that with a little help, many many people will be able to write good acceptable linguistic papers. It tries to spell out clearly and simply what steps we

2 Researching

need to take in order to write a good paper. It is a practical manual--not a theoretical treatise. It is written in the hope that you will find it helpful.

#### Expectation

Let's have an expectation that we can do it - then we will. In other words, let's believe that it's doable, then we'll do it. (If we don't believe it's doable, most of us won't do it.)

The expectation should be that an average person with consultant help should be able to make a workman-like job of it. He should be able to produce not necessarily a brilliant or competitive paper in an international level, but at least a good workpaper job that is publishable locally.

#### How to make best use of this manual

This manual is about how to write linguistic papers. It starts at the point where you have a linguistic problem that you want to solve, and it endeavours to take you through the various steps until you end up with a finished, publishable paper.

We assume that solving the linguistic problem, and writing up the solution are merely different phases of the same total operation. The manual is organised to reflect this. Therefore, after the initial introduction, Part I, called 'Researching', deals both with the initial stages of getting some sort of solution to the problem, and with the later stages of improving the initial solution until it is as good as we can make it. Part II, called 'Writing', deals with the actual writing activities, going from the initial first draft and through the various revisions to the final copy. It begins with Chapter 4, a chapter on writing the first draft. Chapter 5 is called 'How to Achieve Clear Writing' and deals with a number of basic practical maxims about writing which come up again and again in the course of either writing or checking a paper. If these are adhered to, your paper will be a lot clearer than if you ignore them.

Chapter 6, a chapter on checking the first draft, gives a series of checks to apply as you rework and seek to clarify that first draft. These checks effectively apply the maxims just set out in the previous chapter. Chapter 7 is on how to write the later drafts which improve both the analysis and presentation. Chapter 8 is concerned with finishing off the final draft for publication, and this gives in detail all the little things that have to be done in order to make a paper complete.

Introduction 3

There are a number of appendices. Three of these are convenient summaries of material that has been presented in length in the main chapters of the manual. The summary form is given both so that you can see all the material at a glance, and so that you use the summary as a check sheet. The last appendix on 'How to waste paper and save time and nerves' is a procedure which gets you to your destination with least time and effort.

To conclude this introduction, here is both a concise description of what qualities a good paper should have, and a statement of the kinds of attitudes that we need to have in order to write a good paper.

#### Qualities of a good paper

A good paper should have the following three qualities.

- (1) It should be *clear*, that is to say, it should be easily understood, and without any possibility of being misunderstood. In other words, you are sure of what you want to say.
- (2) It should be *concise*; that is to say, there should be no wordiness, redundancy or padding. In other words, you say no more than what you need to say.
- (3) It should be *faithful* in the following two respects:
  - (i) It should be accurate in other words, you say what you want to say, not what you don't want to say.
  - (ii) It should be *complete* so that you say *all* of what you want to say, leaving nothing out. (but see also (2)!)

# Attitudes in a good technical writer

When you write your paper, regard it as an exercise in communication between yourself and the reader. Try to visualize your reader as someone who is trying to understand your paper. Try to think what his background might be. If you don't know which journal your paper will go to, try writing your paper for one of your SIL colleagues.

At each point in your paper ask yourself, 'What would help my reader understand my paper better?' Thus for instance, when you change the topic of discussion, would it not be helpful to have a new subtitle or introduce the new topic with a rhetorical question?

At each point in your paper, also ask yourself 'Will the reader know what I am talking about here?' and 'Is there a good chance that the reader will expect what I'm going to talk about

next?' (i.e., in the next sentence). If the answer to these questions is 'Yes', your reader will probably understand you. His train of thought as he reads will be roughly like your train of thought as you write. To a healthy extent, you and he will be 'on the same wave length.' However, if the answer to both the questions is 'No', beware! You had better build a bridge of some sort so that he can reasonably expect what you are presenting. Then he will understand. (Such a bridge might be a good subtitle, a simple introductory sentence, a rhetorical question, or some simple topicalization device.)

Above all, make it your aim that your reader should never have to guess. Because if he does guess and he guesses wrong, then he will misunderstand your paper at this point and probably a good bit of the rest of the paper as well.

In this connection, it is important to define clearly any terms that you are using in a special sense. Otherwise, your reader won't know what you mean, and he will have to guess and you will have lost your communication. Remember that the object of writing a paper isn't to show all you know, but to prove a point that will interest your reader. It has to be a point within a coherent system. So you have to make your points, show that they belong to a coherent system, and illustrate them with adequate data of the right kind.

It isn't smart to be obscure, it's foolish and it may show lack of discipline or understanding.

# Part I: Researching

Chapter 1: Problem Solving

Chapter 2: On Discovery and Presentation

Chapter 3: On Logical Arrangement and Consistency

We start at the beginning. You have a linguistic problem you want to solve. There's something about your language that puzzles you, and you want to understand what is happening. This chapter is about how to go about your initial linguistic analysis so that you will ultimately finish with a good analysis and a nicely written paper, and so that you will get there without a lot of wasted time and effort.

The method of attack that is outlined below will definitely work for most people. It does, however, presuppose that you have a good speaking knowledge of the language you are working on and that you have an adequate amount of language data. We urge you to give the method a good try.

If you really feel that it won't work for you, do by all means work out some procedure that will be helpful to you and then stick to it. Discussing it with your consultant may be helpful in this regard. But above all, have *some* system because to have no system at all will almost certainly doom you to failure unless you are a genius. And do look at the system given here to see if you can make it serve you. Even if you think that you are different, and that this isn't for you, you are probably not nearly as different as you might think. The system set out here does work for many people. Here's betting it will work for you too.

The first section of the manual is about problem solving--how to get at the problem, how to get at the beginning of a solution, and how to improve and refine that solution. The problem solving process has three components

- defining the problem
- getting initial hypotheses (brainstorming)
- hypothesis testing (against data)

The next section of the manual is about writing, and how we use writing both as a tool towards improving our analysis, and in presenting our results to others.

#### Chapter 1:

# **Problem Solving**

#### 1.1 Determine the problem.

Try to spell it out; this may take several attempts and the description of your problem may change as you learn more. Knowing what you want to solve is an important part of getting the answer. Also survey your resources, to see if you have enough text and of the right kind, paradigms, access to a language helper, access to good bibliography, and the like. You need the appropriate resources in order to solve the problem; different problems need different resources.

## 1.2 Looking for a method

- Is it *like any other problem* that you have solved or seen solved? If so, you can employ the attack on the old problem to solve the new one, taking due account of the similarities and differences. Note that every problem is a little bit different from any other, so that there are dangers in this otherwise very useful approach.
- Look up anything that might be relevant in the literature Learn to build on other people's work. There is nothing to be gained by 'rediscovering the wheel;' life is too short for that. So look up any work that has been done on languages in your own language family on the problem you are working on and even in other languages outside your family if the work is clearly and perceptively written up, and illustrates general theory or method well.
- Is there a standard (established) method available for dealing with your type of problem? (e.g. tone frames for tone, matrices for clause analysis, contrasts for phonemics, etc., etc. If so, by all means use such standard methods, taking care though not to slavishly follow the method if your data really does not fit! (Such misfits should bother you!) Make sure you understand the various steps in any standard method you employ, what each step does and how the various steps are related to each other.

- In case there is no standard method available for your problem, the following attack is useful.
  - (i) What is the final result you want to achieve? Imagine the problem already solved, what would you have gotten?
  - (ii) What sort of raw material i.e. raw data have you got available? Is it sufficient to give you the result you want? (Maybe you need more data).
  - (iii) Try and define the steps necessary to get from your data to your final result work out procedures for each step.
  - (iv) Try and work from the particular to the general in other words, will the pattern that you get from a few particular cases, suggest a more general pattern to look for?
- In connection with any kind of problem solving, two very important questions that Sir Isaiah Berlin asks, are:
  - (i) If you had a solution to the problem, what would it look like?
  - (ii) Everything is like something, what is this like?

These apply both to the *total* problem, and to any *subproblems*. They are useful questions to ask at all stages. When you first start, it may be necessary to start skirmishing around, just getting some data and playing around with it to see where you go. But as you begin to define the problem better, continually ask yourself, what does this data, this partial solution have to do with the problem I'm trying to solve, i.e. concentrate and zero in on the problem.

# 1.3 Working with an initial hypothesis.

You have defined your problem, and you have looked at the various methods that might be available for attacking the problem, and hopefully making some kind of headway on it, even if they don't get you all the way to the final solution.

To start things rolling at all, you need an *initial hypothesis*. This is basically a guess (hopefully intelligent and educated) as to what is going on in the data. You can get an initial hypothesis in various ways. Here are some:

- (i) from the way things go in related languages,
- (ii) from principles that you get from language universals,
- (iii) from a hunch or a feeling that you or you language helper might have as to the way the language is working at this point,

(iv) from taking a little bit of data and working through on a small pilot project you might get some ideas as to what is happening.

Once you have a hypothesis, the next thing to do is to test the hypothesis against data. (The hypothesis of itself isn't a solution, it's only a pointer towards a possible solution. We need to be very clear on this point.)

For your hypothesis, ask yourself the following questions:

- (i) What sort of data and how much data do you need to test your hypothesis?
- (ii) How do you organise your data to test the hypothesis?

Most hypotheses can be stated in the form, if A, then B.

Once you have stated your hypothesis in this form, it is straightforward to test it. Proceed as follows:

Take a large number (or at least a representative sample) of forms, all of which have the property A Do they all show the property B? If the answer is always 'Yes', then the hypothesis is one hundred per cent true. But if there are exceptions, the original hypothesis need to be modified.

For example: Suppose the hypothesis is -ma is a past tense marker. To test it, take say 50 verb forms each with the marker -ma on them. Did the action described by every verb in the data sample occur in past time? If it did for every one, then your hypothesis is one hundred per cent correct. But suppose some didn't. These must not be neglected. And suppose in addition -ma is found on adjectives and nouns as well. These forms also need to be accounted for; you must not sweep them under the rug.

Sometimes *charts* can be a very useful way of organising your data so that you can see whether your hypothesis is holding up or not.

# 1.4 On charting

A chart can be used to organise your data so that the things you are looking for are

- (i) shown prominently,
- (ii) shown systematically and exhaustively.

A chart is very useful if it performs these functions for you. It is helpful to design your chart so that you can use it to check your hypotheses. Don't be too inhibited to change the form of a standard recognised chart if by the change you come up with something that serves your purpose better.

Remember that a chart of itself has no inherent value. Unless it is performing useful functions for you, a chart will just waste your time and proliferate your paperwork. So think carefully and plan before you embark on any extensive charting because charting take time. Will you get the payoff? It's often useful to do a pilot project first to see the way things go.

Labelling is an insightful and productive activity in connection with charting. Give your charts insightful names, names that reflect what they are doing for you. Don't be afraid to write (neatly!) on a chart, the things that the chart is showing you. Write it down; you can't keep it all in your head.

#### 1.5 In the beginning stages.

- Young ideas are like tender plants, don't stomp on them or they'll die. Red lighting is taboo at this stage. Try to develop and encourage (if you are consulting).
- Write a first draft after about a month to organize things and reduce the mess level. In
  checking a first draft as a consultant, don't worry about too many details at this juncture.
  Read looking for essential correctness, and for a sense of direction of where to go next.
  Only eliminate what is obviously phoney. On the other hand, obscurities in expression
  often result from lack of understanding, and reducing the obscurities will improve
  understanding.

#### 1.6 On ideas, hypotheses, etc.

- You always need a hypothesis (i.e. intelligent guess!) of some sort in order to start
  working. A good hypothesis is better than a bad one worst of all is no hypothesis at all.
- Be always ready to change or even to scrap a hypothesis completely, if the data does not
  fit the hypothesis. Don't be a slave to your hypothesis (or to anyone else's) it is your
  slave.
- Don't hastily scrap a hypothesis if 75% of the data fits the hypothesis. If that much data
  fits the hypothesis, there must be something essentially correct about the hypothesis. The
  thing to do here is to modify the hypothesis so that the remaining data also fits not to
  throw the original hypothesis out.

- In forming hypotheses (making intelligent guesses) the following points are useful.
  - (i) Work from known to unknown, from non-suspect to suspect. (e.g. interpretation in phonemics) Does the unknown share the properties of the known?
  - (ii) Your knowledge of linguistic theory and linguistic universals should enable you to suggest starting hypotheses in many cases. You can often also ask with profit 'What's this like in English? - or in some other language I know well?'
  - (iii) Invoke your ideas of pattern. Does the data suggest a pattern? What is needed to complete the pattern? Where does a given bit of data fit in the pattern? (e.g. phoneme placing, identification of morphemes)
  - (iv) Ask questions all sorts of questions, formulate questions in different ways, 'He who asks the right questions gets the right answers.' Do not be afraid to ask 'stupid questions.'
- Whenever you get a bright idea, write it down and file it in a safe place like notebook or a
  computer file. Don't lose it, (Ideas come but rarely, even to those of us who think we are
  good.).

#### 1.7 On data

- Devise a decent information control and retrieval system suitable to the problem i.e. charts, 3 x 5 file, computer file, etc. Sapir said that linguistic analysis is 2% inspiration and 98% bookkeeping it's true. Let your information control system be your slave don't be a slave of it (i.e. don't let your filing system or charting be an end in itself).
- Devise your charts to display what you want displayed; never chart blindly. Chart
  according to some hypothesis. Don't be afraid to modify, scribble or cut up and repaste
  your charts they don't need to be beautiful, they should be functional!
- Keep your data under control. It's better to work with a moderately small amount of data, strictly controlled, than have a mountainous heap of uncontrolled data.
- In the intermediate stages, look for alternative hypotheses, consider counterexamples. Also apply your tentative solution to an increasing corpus of data, and modify your hypotheses accordingly so they fit. Always bend the hypothesis to fit the data never the other way around. Beware of the trap of just sticking to a single hypothesis, that can sometimes lead you up a narrow tube so that you can't see anything else.

- If different parts of your solution look similar try to be precise about:
  - (i) How they are the same
  - (ii) How they are different

Both these questions need answering.

- Try to turn the problem inside out, asking different questions. That often reveals real insights, extra insights (e.g. cohesion).
- When you are reading a semi-final draft (like a second draft in a workshop), the first question to ask is: 'Is the analysis basically sound?'

Clearly if the analysis is *un*sound, we need to examine hypotheses to see where they don't fit, look at the data that *isn't* accounted for and try to account for it. (And remember in this kind of activity that if a hypothesis fits a lot of the data, say 50% or more, it must have quite a bit of 'essential correctness' to it. So *modify* it but *don't throw* it out or else you'll have to account for the 50% or so of the data that the old hypothesis did account for.

If you have a solution that has lots of *ors* in it, you've probably missed a significant generalization somewhere.

But if the analysis is *basically sound*, then your approach as a consultant or as a self checker must be fundamentally different. Supposing that the analysis is basically sound, but there are some sections that are quite unclear, even apparently incoherent. Ask yourself: 'What is he really trying to say?' Usually the best attitude to adopt is that he is a reasonable person and has something valid in mind but has difficulty in getting it said.

#### 1.8 Testing an analysis

- In the *final stages*, the analysis needs to be tested so that it will be able to withstand the harsh light of day. It needs to be:
  - (i) watertight logically, i.e. no holes in the reasoning, no contradictions, fully consistent.
  - (ii) cover a representative data sample of the language, i.e. not a biassed selection of data examples chosen just to prove your point, but rather a fair consideration of the whole field of relevant data including counterexamples.

(iii) Terminology needs to be *standard* and your reader should *never have to guess* at what you mean by any term you see.

# 1.9 Testing the description

The description needs to be

- (1) clear, with no obscurities, with terms clearly defined, charts properly labelled, examples well explained in having clear glosses and an easily recoverable free translation, a well-defined context and a clear statement on what the example is meant to illustrate. If the example is a long one, a clause-by-clause match by numbers between the vernacular and the free translation adds a lot to the clarity. Also capitalizing key morphemes in the vernacular and the gloss is helpful too.
- (ii) explicit, avoid vague generalities. Keep sentences short.
- (iii) concise, (no wordiness, no redundancy, no waffle)
- (iv) faithful, i.e. truly tell the real state of affairs. In addition, the final draft of the paper should relate the investigation that has been undertaken to similar investigations and to relevant general theory. Every editor wants to know if you know your bibliography

#### Chapter 2:

# On Discovery and Presentation

Discovery has to do with how we find out things about our languages. About how we set about solving a problem. And when we've got what we think might be a solution, about how we know whether that solution is correct. The previous chapter about Problem Solving had a lot to do with discovery.

**Presentation** has to do with describing our findings in such a way that other people can follow what we have done, profit by it and comment on our solution and so help us improve it.

There are some very real differences between discovery and presentation. Often discovery involves brainstorming, hunches, bright ideas picked from seemingly nowhere. It can be illogical and haphazard. We might, in the early stages, not even be sure what we are talking about. All this is OK in the beginning stages of discovery. Then as we move on into testing our solutions to see if they really hold water, we have to be more rigorous and systematic in our methods.

Presentation is different from discovery. In presenting our work so that others can follow it, we need to proceed step by step in a clear, logical way, and the steps that we take need to be of a size manageable by the reader. We need to at least look as if we know what we are talking about. All this is so different from discovery.

And yet, in the total task of coming to an understanding of a problem and its solution, both discovery and presentation are important. The very process of presentation will lead us to think about our data and our solution in new ways that will enhance our understanding. Presentation is not *just for the benefit of the audience*, the presenter reaps advantages as well. So let us work hard on both discovery and presentation.

#### 2.1 Discovery

There are at least two different ways of discovering things in science.

In the *deductive* method, we start with a general principle and then we search through our data to find illustrations which support the principle. This is a good method but we need to

be honest and we must also consider the bits of our data that don't fit the principle, sometimes even contradicting it. Such counterexamples, usually mean that we have to rethink the principle and modify it or restate it so that all the data fit. The counterexamples should not be regarded as an embarrassment; on the contrary, they help us towards a better understanding of the language.

In the *inductive* method, we start with a body of data, say a text or several texts and we examine our data to see what regularities and patterns we find in it. From these regularities and patterns we try to infer some general principles in the form of hypotheses. Then we must test these hypotheses on further data to see how they fit or whether we need to modify them. (Notice that at this testing stage we are now back into the *deductive* method).

When we engaged in discovering what regularities and patterns there are in a sample of data, any method is fair as a first step. Anything from a simple hunch, a revelation in a dream, to a cold logical piece of reasoning is OK as a starting point to give us a hypothesis. But then we need to check these hypotheses very carefully with *lots of data* to see how and whether they fit. At the checking stage most people find that some way of systematically charting and organizing their data is helpful - it ensures that you don't miss anything out. Some people find that a certain amount of charting is also helpful at both the initial stage of looking for a hypothesis and also at the stage of checking a hypothesis through exhaustively.

#### 2.2 Presentation

When we have arrived at the stage where we have a solution to our problem, either a provisional solution or a definitive one, we have to face the task of *presenting* the solution. Presenting what we have found, is in some respects a different task from discovering the solution. Here are three possible strategies to use for presentation.

# 2.2.1 Presenting following the deductive method

We can choose to present, corresponding to the first method of discovery, a description of an application of the deductive method. Here we can enunciate the principle and present data that confirms it and also data that apparently is at variance with it. If there are several principles that we want to present in the same paper, we will need to relate them to each other.

Often in writing data oriented papers, however, we can get help by looking at previously written data oriented papers illustrating the same principles but using data from other

languages. The order and method of presentation in such papers can be a useful guide in how we organize our paper.

#### 2.2.2 Presenting following the inductive method

It is rather more difficult to present the findings of an investigation by the inductive method. The inductive method starts with a case study (or studies). A case study will probably be interesting to someone who is working on that particular language or a closely related one, but it is not likely to be of much interest to most other linguists while it is in that form. However, if general linguistic principles can be abstracted from the case study, and the investigation rewritten so that the data illustrates these principles, the interest in the material will be much greater.

#### 2.2.3 Presenting a study and comparing it with other solutions of similar problems

In presenting a study which is rather more theoretically oriented, you may want to compare the solution you have got for your language with other people's solutions for similar problems. There are two ways of making such a presentation.

**Positive-negative.** State your solution i.e. the 'correct' solution first, and then show why it is superior to other solutions.

Negative-positive. State first what is wrong with other (people's) solutions (or your own previous studies) and then give your own correct solution and show why it is correct or superior.

I personally prefer the first, i.e. the positive-negative option. The negative-positive approach has the disadvantage of starting the paper with a whole lot of rather useless material on invalid solutions and only coming to the interesting part of the paper i.e. the 'real solution' after the reader is thoroughly bored and exhausted. Nevertheless, many people seem to prefer doing it this way.

Whichever way you decide to present your material, the thing to avoid at all costs is a compendium of unrelated facts or worse still, a list of examples. Facts presented as a list of isolated items are very unconvincing. As one editor put it, 'a list is not a paper' (any more than a laundry list is.) However, when the same facts are presented showing the relationships between them, the paper becomes much more interesting and convincing because your statement of the relationships allows the reader to participate, think through and evaluate your material. So if you already know the relationships, state them. If you

don't, then you need to think through what the relationships are. It is an excellent general rule of thumb that a paper that is interesting to the reader is very likely to be one written by an author who understands his material.

Let us remember that there are at least two good reasons for working hard at presentation. First, and perhaps most important, the very process of organizing our data and trying to present it helps us to better understand what we've done - it alerts us to the gaps in both our data and our reasoning, and as we fill these in our understanding improves and becomes firm. Often in the processes of presenting a partial solution, we find valuable clues towards getting to the final solution. Second, once we can present our case clearly, we can give our presentation to our colleagues. Some of our colleagues will find our solutions helpful in their own work. Others will be able to comment on our solution and help us to improve them.

Such comments from colleagues often throw new light on the problem and the solution; they help us to see things that we weren't able to see before because of our 'blind spots' (and all of us, consultants included, have blind spots).

#### Chapter 3:

# On Logical Arrangement and Consistency

In a write up on some aspect of your language, the way in which you present your argument is at least as important as the amount of data that you present about the language. A good argument is both logical and consistent. A logical argument is one that proceeds step by step until the final conclusion is reached. A consistent argument is one that holds together with no parts in it that contradict each other.

If you present your argument logically so that the reader can follow you easily step by step from beginning to end, he will also be able to understand your data. However, if the argument is round about or confused, he will be unlikely to follow either the data or the argument. And incidentally, you won't have really understood it either, even though you may think you have.

## 3.1 On logical arrangement.

A paper with a good logical arrangement is easy to follow. Such a paper will be one in which the starting assumptions are clearly stated and one in which the reasoning is such that everything follows from something that's been presented before. In other words, nothing that is presented earlier follows from something that is only presented later.

However, some arguments are very difficult, or even impossible, to follow because the logic is disordered. Among such are:

- (i) arguments that are *back to front*, i.e. that assume something at an early stage in the paper which isn't proved until later in the paper. This forces a lot of repetition and roundabout reasoning, and as a result the paper becomes unintelligible.
- (ii) arguments that are *circular*, i.e. that start by assuming what the author is trying to prove.
- (iii) arguments in which the assumptions are not stated. At the very least, such papers are irritating and annoying to read at the worst, unreadable.

The writer can rearrange an argument so that it is easier to follow by doing the following. Extract the component propositions of the argument and write them down on a piece of paper, in a column, starting each proposition on a new line. These propositions should be short and concise. Ignore all padding.

Suppose the propositions are

A

В

C

D

E

Now examine the proposition and number them according to the best logical progression. We can do this as follows. Supposing the overall argument goes like:

If we assume B,

then C follows from B

then D follows from C

then A follows from D

then E follows from A

then we should number the propositions accordingly, viz:

4 A

1 B

2 C

3 D

5 E

Now recopy the propositions in the numerical order that you have established; thus in the above illustration, the recopying would give

1 B

2 C

3 D

4 A

5 E

Now try and rewrite the argument in this logical order of propositions. You may well find that the spaces needed to present the argument has shrunken considerably and that in addition the argument is clearer. You may find in this rewrite that some of the previous version of the paper is useable (in which case you can cut and paste) and some of it is not. Which ever way it goes, the rewrite will be well worthwhile because it has clarified things for you.

Some language problems lend themselves readily to a step by step sort of logical treatment.

There are other kinds of problems where you apparently have to know everything in order to know anything. These are the problems that need you to have a global picture with many, many interrelationships between the different parameters. For them, a step by step sort of treatment is very difficult. But these are problems where a case study approach could be very useful.

#### 3.2 On consistency

Most editors look to see whether a paper is consistent or not. By a consistent paper, we mean a paper whose various parts stand together. There are at least five different aspects of consistency that we have to deal with in writing and checking a paper.

# 3.2.1 Internal consistency (of argumentation)

All the elements of an argument should support one another - there should be no two statements in the paper which contradict each other. This applies both at paper level and at local paragraph level. Contradictions often mean that there is still something vague and unresolved in the author's mind and so there is some reworking to be done.

# 3.2.2 Consistency of claims with the data

Every paper will make some claims as to what it has shown or proved. The big question here is, have these claims been substantiated by the end of the paper? Or have the claims been extravagant so that the author hasn't delivered what he claimed or promised to? (On the other hand, sometimes the author can be too modest and not claim that he has proved anything.)

## 3.2.3 Consistency of presuppositions

This is particularly important when either the author or his consultant uses an eclectic approach, that tries to get the best out of several different theories. On the one hand there is a lot to be said for an eclectic approach, but we also need to remember that different theoretical approaches start from different presuppositions, sometimes radically different, and sometimes even mutually conflicting. If one uses various different theoretical approaches when solving a problem, one needs to be sure that the presuppositions relating to them in one's paper are at least consistent and not conflicting.

## 3.2.4 Consistent terminology

Terminology also has to be consistent. Let's keep our terminology as standard as possible, consistent with the theory it came from, and let's not deliberately use terms that conflict with normally accepted usage. Especial attention is needed if you use a new term or if you take an old already established term and then use it in a different or extended sense. In such a case, be sure to define your usage of the term. Otherwise, you will almost certainly be misunderstood

#### 3.2.5 Theoretical consistency

If your paper purports to have a theoretical thrust, it needs to be consistent with the theory that you claim to follow. Or if you claim to add to the theory or depart from it, then you should say that you are doing this, give your reasons for so doing and substantiate your reasons with data whenever possible.

# Part II: Writing

Chapter 4: Practical Steps in Writing the First Draft

Chapter 5: How to Achieve Clear Writing

Chapter 6: Checking the First Draft

Chapter 7: After the First Draft

Chapter 8: Finishing Off

This section of the manual is about writing. It assumes that you have done a certain amount of brainstorming and preliminary analysis, and that you are ready to start writing. The section is divided into five chapters.

Chapter 4, 'Practical Steps in Writing the First Draft' assumes that you have done a certain amount of preliminary analysis and have available a bunch of charts and rough notes, and shows you the steps to take to write the first draft.

Chapter 5, 'How to Achieve Clear Writing' sets forth important principles and gives pointers on how to write clearly, convincingly and attractively.

Chapter 6 is about checking the first draft, correcting the grammar, smoothing out the style. The checks set out in this chapter are ones that you should be able to do by yourself. (To further facilitate things for you, a one page summary of these checks has been provided in the appendix.)

Chapters 7 and 8 are intended to help you work on the draft until you get a faithful analysisand a clear presentation. To get the best help out of this material it is recommended that you proceed as follows:

First read through Chapter 5, 'How to Achieve Clear Writing' several times, so that you understand what has been said before you start writing anything.

Then write your first draft, following the steps detailed in Chapter 4. As you write that first draft, try to observe the principles of writing set out in Chapter 5, but don't agonise over the grammar and style at this juncture. Your most important job by far at this stage is to get your data and analysis down on paper.

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But after you have done writing your first draft, use the checks given in Chapter 6 (which are based on the principles set out in Chapter 5) and so tidy up your draft. By all means do these checks and make the corresponding repairs to your first draft before you hand it in for your consultant to check. If you do this, he/she will be able to follow your paper a great deal better and so be in a much better position to make helpful comments on the linguistic analysis (rather than on the grammar and style which are far less interesting.) and you will profit much more.

But in case you have difficulty with making these repairs in grammar and style, don't agonise over it. Ask for help and let's do it together.

Finally, this section of the manual is about writing, but the field worker needs to remember that after the first draft, good writing and good analysis go hand in hand.

#### Chapter 4:

# Practical Steps in Writing the First Draft.

Assumed starting point: We assume that you have done some analysis and that you have a bunch of rather scrappy notes and charts. The purpose of this section is to set out a procedure for you to follow in writing the first draft.

## 4.1 Getting things ready

#### 4.1.1 Make an ordered table of contents:

- On a clean sheet of paper make a list of all the topics you have covered and studied so far. (Make it exhaustive up to now). If there is any doubt about any topic, include it.
- Try to arrange these topics in some sort of logical order, so that each topic follows from those topics that precede it, and not the other way round. One way to do this would be to copy the bare title of each topic onto its own 3x5 slip, and then set all the 3x5's onto a table top. Then shuffle the 3x5's around on the table top, until you get some good logical groupings. Once you have gotten good logical groupings, number the 3x5's serially, and copy the titles with numbers onto a sheet of paper (or into a computer file). This now is your ordered table of contents.
- Or you might try a spider diagram (which has the advantage of presenting everything on
  one single page so that you can see it at a glance). A spider diagram starts with a central
  idea (or main idea), and then the individual ideas that depend on the main idea are
  represented by lines that branch out from the centre (like the legs of a spider.) So more
  important ideas will be near the centre, and less important ones near the edge. It is easy to
  add further ideas to such a display.

One can, of course, linearise such a spider display, and restate it in the form of a table of contents. However, in the linearisation process, some structure is imposed on the arrangement that wasn't there before, and some is lost as well.

#### 4.1.2 Sorting the charts and papers

- Now look at all the charts (and pages of notes) that you have prepared up to now. Sort
  these out into piles, with each pile corresponding to one of the topics that you have
  written down in the ordered table of contents that you have just prepared.
- Once you have done this sort, label each chart or sheet immediately with an appropriate
  title, and give each page a page number. The page number gives you the location of that
  sheet within the pile, and now you have tabs on it and you won't lose it.

Do not begrudge the time and effort that you spend on this sorting and labelling. It is an important part of your work, and things will become a lot clearer after you have done it.

It is quite likely that in the course of this sorting out process, you will find topics that you
had worked on but which were not listed in the first ordered table of contents that you
have just prepared. If so, add the topic(s) to your table of contents at the most logical
places and process the corresponding charts and sheets accordingly.

## 4.1.3 Describing the sortings

- Now look at each of the 'piles' or groupings of charts etc that you have just made.
   Describe each grouping as follows: State the kind of data involved, and give your analysis and your conclusions so far. Use formulas and charts as needed.
- If you use a chart of any sort, make sure that you give the chart a title, and/or state its
  purpose on the chart itself. Also label the axes (or coordinates) of every chart (so that the
  reader will know what is being represented here.) The reader should never have to guess
  any of these things or you will be in trouble.
- If you use a formula, your reader needs to know what the symbols in the formula stand for (unless you are using absolutely standard terminology.)
- Chapter 6 gives detailed instructions on how to set out data.

# 4.1.4 Tidying up

Rough notes written in longhand should be keyboarded. If you are keyboarding rough
notes, check the grammar and spelling as you go, to ensure that you have words that are
spelled correctly and sentences that are smooth and coherent.

 Type out your data and put in the morpheme boundaries, morpheme glosses and free translation.

### 4.1.5 The use of a provisional abstract

- Somewhere in the beginning stages of first draft writing, it is helpful to write a provisional abstract. In this, state the content and purpose of your paper in between 100 and 150 words. This is a very useful exercise because it gets you to thinking about the project as a whole, and so you will find writing the first draft easier. Don't worry if you feel that it is a very sketchy effort at this point. This is a provisional abstract, and you may want to alter it quite extensively before you present it as the definitive abstract when you finish the final draft of the paper. Nevertheless, time spent on it now is time well spent because it gives you a valuable sense of direction. Don't be afraid to spend several hours on it; it will pay off.
- When is the best time to write this provisional abstract? It varies with the person doing
  the analysis. Some write it even before making the list of topics, some write it straight
  after doing the list of topics, and some after having done the sort.

### 4.2 To bear in mind as you write

## 4.2.1 State points clearly

State all your points as clearly as you are able to at this stage. Any doubts and
vagueness that you have should also be stated so that these things can be discussed and
hopefully clarified. And to illustrate each point you are making, present as much data as
you can reasonably and easily get in the time available.

## 4.2.2 Keep a sense of direction.

This can be helped by:

- diagraming
- talking it over with someone explain the content of your paper to someone, trying very hard to be clear and intelligible as you do it.
- using a spider diagram summary

- writing out a table of contents from the spider diagram which reflects the (linear) order in
  which you write your material up. Then as each section gets written up, cross it off the
  list. (It makes everyone feel good as section by section gets successively crossed off.)
- writing a summary of what you know before you start writing the paper proper.

### 4.2.3 Numbering

Many people find that a good numbering system is a great help in organising the information in a paper. It enables you as you are writing the paper to see how the various bits fit in--and it offers the same kind of help to the reader as he reads it.

- Divide your paper into sections or chapters. Each chapter should have its own chapter title and chapter number. Within each chapter (section) you may want further subdivisions (and each should have its own subtitle.)
- Don't make your numbering system too complicated, however. By the time one gets to 2.1.3.4.6 the complexity is so great that it largely outweighs any advantage that a numbering system might have.

### 4.2.4 Data examples

• Data examples also need to be numbered. In the final version of your paper, they need to be numbered consecutively (i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4, ...). Numbering your examples makes it easy for you to refer to any particular example anywhere in your description, even if the place in your description where you are currently writing is several pages away from the place in the paper where the example was set out. Without numbering, this is very difficult to do.

But even though the final version needs to have consecutive numbering, you can adopt more a flexible way in your preliminary versions. For instance some sort of decade or centenary system would do in a preliminary write up.

Such a system allows you to insert a new example into the middle of an already established series of examples. It is awkward to do this with a series of examples that have already been consecutively numbered.

 If you really hate numbers, it is possible to work out a system whereby you avoid most of the numbers. Nevertheless, you paper still needs to be divided into meaningful sections and subsections, and each section must have a good title, each subsection a good subtitle. What you must avoid is a paper which consists of 20-30 pages of examples and descriptions, but without a division or a subtitle anywhere. Someone reading a paper tike that will have great difficulty keeping a sense of direction; he will just get lost.

Whatever you decide to do, it is necessary to number all your examples consecutively. Virtually all authors number their examples these days.

The material in your first draft is to provide a framework so that you can stand back and think about the problem more clearly, discuss it with others, and add to the solution, develop it and improve it.

#### 4.2.5 Perfectionism

• Don't waste any time on perfectionism. Remember the first draft is a tool to organize what we've got so that we can go further. Our aim should be to make it as useful a tool as possible, consistent with a reasonable amount of work. The analysis at this stage is going to be imperfect, but we will be able to refine it with further discussion and reanalysis. So let there be very little in your paper at this early stage that you will feel that you must 'defend with your last drop of blood'

We hope that you can see that perfectionism at this stage has some very real dangers, quite apart from a lot of unnecessary extra time and effort put in. It is essential to avoid doing things you don't have to do at this early stage.

## 4.3 Some practical hints which will facilitate your work.

These are purely mechanical aspects of paper writing. Observing them will save most people a lot of time and frustration, freeing people from some of the drudgery so they can think and generally be human.

• When you write anything by hand, use only *one side* of paper, otherwise you'll find yourself continually having to refer to both sides of the same sheet at the same time. The paper that you save just is not worth the frustration and loss of energy.

Having material on only one side of the paper allows you the extra facility of cutting and pasting by hand.

- And especially when you are doing charts, do each chart on a separate sheet of paper.
   This enables you to shuffle your various charts around and to regroup them, reorder them.
- Start every new topic on a fresh sheet of paper (or in a new computer file if you are
  keyboarding). Again resist the temptation to save paper. This means that if you later want
  to say more about the previous topic you simply carry on where you left off without
  clashing into the text-space of the new topic. It also means that you can shuffle your
  topics around freely.
- Make sure all bits of papers you use are the same size. This saves an incredible amount of mess, fuss and worry. By all means scribble ideas and solutions on odd bits of paper, this is in fact one of the most fruitful ways of generating ideas, but paste these odd bits onto a full size sheet and give the sheet a number. By the same token, if you cut up a page so that you can transfer some of the text of the page to somewhere else in your write-up, fill out the cut up page with blank paper pasted on so that it becomes standard size.
- Try to avoid writing anything twice that you only need to write once. If you are using a
  word processor, learn to take full advantage of the time saving options that your machine
  has, especially the cut and paste facilities. And if a computer is not available, still take full
  advantage of scissors, glue and photocopier.

### 4.4 How to present data examples

Almost every linguistic paper contains lots of language data. The data and examples are your evidence for the linguistic conclusions that you come to. So it is important that they are set out so that they are:

- (i) easily intelligible
- (ii) the point that each example (or set of examples) makes is stated clearly, and there is a clear explanation to show how the example illustrates the point.

Each example will have the following parts:

- the vernacular
- the gloss
- the free translation
- the context (in the case of discourse examples)
- the explanation

#### 4.4.2 The vernacular

CAPITALIZE the relevant morphemes in the vernacular and the gloss.

### 4.4.2 The gloss

A gloss should be semantically accurate and linguistically insightful.

#### 4.4.3 The free translation

The free translation should:

- sound like good English so that the reader can get the flavor.
- match closely enough to the gloss so that a reader who does not speak the language and
  who does not know the culture can convert from the morpheme gloss to the free
  translation in a reasonable sort of way, i.e. without guessing and without having to ask
  you any further (oral) questions.
- if you need to insert extra English words into the free translation in order to make it flow, by all means do so but put such words in parentheses so that the reader knows this is added information (rather like the italics in the King James version of the Bible).

#### 4.4.4 The context

You need to give adequate contexts for all discourse examples. Sometimes a preceding context is needed, sometimes a following context, and sometimes both. That's the only way to make discourse examples understandable. An adequate account of the discourse function of an example sentence needs to include enough context and enough information about how the story is going, that the reader of your paper can see how the information content of the sentence relates to the information in the rest of the story.

## 4.4.5 The explanation

- The morphemes under discussion should be highlighted in some way.
- You should state quite clearly what each example illustrates and you should check to see that it really does illustrate what you claim it illustrates.
- You should make clear just how the example illustrates the principle it is intended to illustrate. The reader should not have to guess.

• When you write the explanation of an example, *first* write the explanation of the example and how the example applies to the general theory. Add random comments and the negative side *after* this. In other words, don't 'snow' your reader with a lot of detail about what the example is *not* about and what it does *not* illustrate first or you will risk losing him and confusing him. The reader expects to know what the example is about and *does* illustrate first, then he can relate the current example to the previous examples and the development up to that point. If you fulfill this expectation, the reader will be with you and then you can put in your comments and the negative side. In short avoid the NOT A BUT B approach; the B NOT A is much better. First telling the reader what the example is *not about* is usually unhelpful.

## 4.4.6 Achieving clarity in an example which has a lot of data in it.

• In a discourse paper, it is often necessary to present illustrative data which consists of a paragraph of several sentences. In such cases, it can be very difficult for a reader who does not speak your language to follow the data, to match up the vernacular with the gloss and to match up both with the free translation. You can do a lot towards making things clearer by numbering corresponding sentences in the vernacular and the free translation. (See example 4-1.)

### Example 4-1: Newari Text

mə-va-k-u-se<sup>(2)</sup> nã.<sup>(1)</sup> iva chũ ahyə: duru, na-k-a-: NEG-do-CS-ST-MEANS eat-CS-PTC-NF also work ghee milk any təy-a-təya-mhə<sup>3)</sup> mhyae<sup>(4)</sup> dã-sënise sikə: tha: v*āũ-k*a daughter get.up-from comfortable-MAN put-PTC-RDP-ITM than own va-k-a-:(5) ກລ໌: himwə jaka mə-dv5-tale iva rice.chaff only NEG-sleep-ST-as.long.as work do-CS-PTC-NF also nhyesu-mhyae -!(9) swəy-e-ji-u-qu<sup>(8)</sup> khən-a-(9) nə-k-atəy-a-mhə(°) step-daughter look-INF-good-ST-ACT see-PTC-NF eat-CS-PTC-put-PTC-ITM lhat-a.(10) khã cihrimã-mho-s-ya nugəl-əe: anek matter speak-PD stepmother-VPT-SP-GEN heart-LOC various

When (she) saw<sup>(9)</sup> that the stepdaughter<sup>(7)</sup>, whom she made to work from the time she got up until the time she went to bed<sup>(5)</sup> and whom she fed only rice chaff<sup>(6)</sup>, was better looking than<sup>(6)</sup> her own daughter<sup>(4)</sup>, to whom she fed ghee and milk<sup>(1)</sup> and whom, without making her do any kind of work<sup>(2)</sup>, she allowed to live in comfort<sup>(3)</sup>, the stepmother felt certain things in her heart<sup>(10)</sup>. (Goat 3.1)

Does the data illustrate the point you are trying to make?

- When you are presenting several examples, illustrating the same point, there will be for
  each example the vernacular data, the gloss, the free translation and the explanation
  accompanying the data. Is there adequate spacing and indexing in the right places so that
  the reader will know where one example finishes and the next one starts? Do all you can
  to prevent the reader from getting lost.
- When you are presenting several examples to illustrate the same point, present the simple, straightforward examples first and the examples with complications later. If you do your presentation the other way round, the reader will be first confused by the complex example at the beginning and if he does eventually get through these he will then find the simple examples at the end to be trivial. By presenting the straightforward examples first, even a reader who dosen't know much about the language or the subject will stay on track, and he will also stand a better chance of understanding the complex ones at the end. And even if he misses out on the complex ones, he will already have had the satisfaction of understanding the simpler one at the beginning and thus be encouraged to go on to read the next section of your paper.

## 4.4.7 Additional hint for setting out a discourse example

- Every morpheme or word in the vernacular line of an interlinear text should be easily
  paired up with its annotations on succeding lines. With nonproportional (fixed space)
  fonts the first letter of a word in the vernacular line should be directly above the first letter
  of its gloss or annotation. Some may choose to align morphemes in this way as well,
  which is helpful in languages with complex internal morphology.
- It is essential that word and morpheme breaks in the vernacular line uniquely match the
  corresponding breaks in the annotation lines. Thus, if space is used to mark word
  boundaries in the vernacular line, space in the annotation line should only be used as
  boundaries between annotations for words. If hyphens are used to separate morphemes

within words on the vernacular line, hyphens should be used only to separate the glosses for morphemes in the annotation line.

• If spaces and hyphens are used only as word and morpheme boundaries respectively as is recommended here, something other than a space or a hyphen must be used to join the words in a multiword gloss of a single morpheme. In the following examples period is used to mark word boundaries within multiword glosses. In example 4-2 the single word, lakhe, is given the multiword gloss 'male.monster' where the words are joined within the gloss my means of a period.

Example 4-2: (Newari)

o-bale lakka lakhe lasi ni-mha wal-a that-time exactly male.monster female.monster two-CL come-PD Just then a couple of monsters, a male and a female, arrived

#### Chapter 5:

# How to Achieve Clear Writing

All of us would like what we write to be clear and vivid. We would like to be able to say what we want to say, to not say what we don't want to say, and to leave no doubts in the reader's mind. How do we achieve this?

Although there is much more than we can hope to deal with in this short treatment, there are some basic principles which come to mind. These, if applied, will make our writing much clearer. They are simple principles, but have been shown to work from experience.

In the treatment of this chapter, we will first discuss generally the kinds of principles involved. Then we go over the ground again with specific examples to illustrate the principles.

### 5.1 Principles of clear writing.

We can say that there are certain *grammatical* and certain *lexical* principles that lead to clarity, and also certain logical principles. The logical principles have already been set out in Section 3.1, 'On logical arrangement,'which deals with such matters as back to front arguments, circularity and unstated assumptions, and in Section 3.2, 'On consistency.' So here we will concentrate on the grammatical and lexical devices.

On the grammatical side, we have the following issues:

- parallel constructions
- topic signalling
- length of sentences
- realistic use of repetition
- the implicit and the explicit
- use of specifics
- · referentiality of items

#### 5.1.1 Parallel constructions

When we write in parallel constructions, we take the same piece of surface grammar and we string it out end to end two or three times. By this means, we describe two or three abstract relationships in our data which are similar to each other.

Why does this kind of description help the reader to understand more readily? When the reader sees that there are two (or more) tokens of the same grammatical construction strung out one after the other, he only has to process *one* of them, and he knows that the others will be the same. That cuts down the effort it takes him to process the grammar of the total construction. Then, since the parallelism between the tokens of the same grammatical construction reflects the sameness in the abstract relations in the data that is being discussed, the reader also gets that extra signal to help him understand.

On the other hand, if the author does *not* use parallel constructions when he could, the extra effort needed to process his writing makes it much harder for the reader, and he may not understand. So much effort has been put into processing the grammar that he has little left to understand the linguistics.

#### 5.1.2 Topic signalling

If you, as author, want your reader to understand you easily, one thing you must do is to keep clearly before him what it is that you are talking about. This is a very big topic in itself, but at least two important and useful practical points can be made here.

The first is that in a well written paragraph, the *first sentence should be the topic sentence*; that is to say, that first sentence should tell the reader *what the paragraph as a whole is about.* The reader expects this, and if he finds it to be actually so in your writing, he will understand you the more easily.

The second is that when you write a paragraph, you should keep a *constant topic* within a paragraph or if you *change* that topic, you should signal that change clearly. Often starting a new paragraph is a good way of signalling. By the same reasoning, do not jump from topic A to topic B, and then back to topic A again all in the same paragraph, because if you do, you will have your reader tied up in knots trying to figure out what you are talking about. Far better to reorder the sentences in the paragraph so that you first deal with topic A and then make a paragraph break and deal with topic B.

#### 5.1.3 Sentence length

Long sentences are difficult for the reader to understand because there is too much grammatical and lexical information for him to process. He can neither keep it all in his memory, nor can he know what to keep in focus. (Parallel constructions are better, because although they are long, there is in fact relatively less to process.) By keeping your sentences reasonably short, you keep the processing effort per sentence down to a manageable level, and it becomes much easier for the reader. Incidentally, as a side benefit, you will understand it much better yourself! Try it and see.

### 5.1.4 Realistic use of repetition

Contrary to what is said in some simplistic treatments on how to write, it is not always wrong to repeat. Repetition can be used very effectively to emphasise a point—to drive it home. But when you repeat, make sure that you are repeating for this purpose. If retained, repetitions should be acknowledged. Otherwise the reader may get the impression that the author is going in circles.

The fact is, however, that when we are struggling to write a first draft and it takes all our effort to get our thoughts on paper, it is unlikely for those thoughts to come in nice lean chunks. We are nervous and we repeat inadvertently. The time to rectify this is when we go through the first draft to apply our grammar checks. We need to do this because otherwise, the reader will have to use extra effort to process the repetition and he will be confused. If that repetition is not helping you to communicate, it is a hindrance and should not be there. It is extra fat that needs to be trimmed off. Get rid of it, and both you and the reader will find things clearer.

### 5.1.5 The implicit and the explicit.

A number of issues in clear writing have to do with the right use of the implicit versus the explicit. Among these are the use of passives, nominalisations and participles.

When we write *explicitly* we spell everything out and leave nothing for the reader to guess. When we write *implicitly*, we leave some things unsaid and the reader may have to guess. In some parts of our writing, we may want to leave some things unsaid, i.e. implicit. After all, we don't want to clutter up the paper with all sorts of unwanted, excess information. On the other hand, there are times when it is important to be as explicit as possible, so that the reader has no doubt what you (the author) mean.

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We need to be aware that there are certain grammatical constructions in English that inherently carry implicit information. Three of the most common are the *passive* (with deleted agent), *nominalisations* and *participles*.

In many uses of the English passive, the agent does get deleted, as for instance in 'The paper was finished yesterday.' This is a lot more common than 'The paper was finished by John yesterday'. However, it is true that writers will often use the passive with the deleted agent without realising that the reader then has no way of knowing who the agent was. And if he needs to know, he's lost. If the reader does need to know the agent of the action in order to understand your argument, then it is up to you as author to supply that information. You can do it by switching to a verb in the active voice—in this construction the subject of the active verb is the agent and this cannot delete.

Similarly, when we use nominalisations (e.g. like 'obedience') we must not forget that they originally came from verbs (i.e. 'obey' in the cited example.). And all verbs have subjects, transitive verbs have subjects and objects. And if the reader needs to know who the subject (and/or object) of the verb is in order to understand your argument, then the nominalisation of itself will not give that information. So you need to give it, and one way of doing this would be to use the verb itself instead of the nominalisation.

## 5.1.6 Generalities and specifics

Often manuscripts are difficult to follow because statements are made in generalities and the reader has to struggle to see what the specific application is. It makes it so much clearer when the author puts in some specific information. Moreover, it is often difficult (and sometimes impossible) to check on the accuracy of a statement given in generalities, but specifics are easy to check.

## 5.1.7 Referentiality-words that don't refer to anything

If you use a word that should refer to something but actually doesn't refer to anything, your reader will have all kinds of difficulty in understanding what you mean. We need to remember that words like pronouns (e.g. he, she, it, they. . .) and demonstratives (e.g. this, that, these, those) only have meaning when there is another word or situation in the (preceding) context that they connect up with. This word or situation we call the antecedent. If there is no such antecedent in your writing, the reader will struggle in vain to find one. So make sure there is one.

Again when we are writing the first draft, we need to concentrate so hard on what we are trying to describe that we often forget to make our antecedents explicit. The problem will probably be aggravated when we start to either reorder the sentences in a paragraph, or insert a sentence in between two sentences that were already there from last time we wrote. All this is OK and a legitimate part of the learning process. But in order to make your manuscript intelligible to someone else, you need to check that all your antecedents are there and if they are not, to rewrite so that they are.

### 5.1.8 Lexical devices and clarity

Choosing the right word is important for communication. The right choice of words makes your writing alive and easy to read; a less suitable choice make it stodgy and uninteresting.

- simple vs. complex
- familiar vs. unfamiliar
- · avoid unnecessary words
- use active verbs
- avoid the use of weak verbs

## 5.2 Some practical examples illustrating the principles

Having given a preamble on the general principles involved, we will now present some actual examples of how things work.

### 5.2.1 Illustrations of parallel constructions

Use *parallel constructions*. It makes your explanation a lot easier to read because items come according to the reader's expectation.

Here is an illustration showing you how and how *not* to do it. The version given in the next paragraph is OK.

### Example 5-1:

A *major participant* is one who interacts with other participants for large stretches of the discourse. A *minor participant* is one who interacts with other participants for only short stretches of the discourse. A *prop* is an inanimate object that is part of the scenery and obviously cannot interact.

But the following alternative version is obscure and **not OK** because the last sentence is **not parallel** in its construction to the previous two.

### Example 5-2:

A *major participant* is one who interacts with other participants for large stretches of the discourse. A *minor participant* is one who interacts with other participants for only short stretches of the discourse. An inanimate object that is part of the scenery obviously cannot interact. It is called a *prop*.

Here is another example: First the parallel version (the OK version)

### Example 5-3:

The relative clauses that modify the subject NP come near the beginning of the sentence and are therefore more likely to refer to the preceding linguistic context, whereas the relative clauses that modify a (non fronted) object or complement NP come at or towards the end of a sentence, and are therefore more likely to relate to the following context.

Now look at the same content expressed in a paragraph *without* any parallel constructions. This is less easy to understand, because the reader's expectations are not met by the linguistic surface structures.

### Example 5-4:

The relative clauses that modify the subject NP come near the beginning of the sentence and are therefore more likely to refer to the preceding linguistic context, but what is more likely to relate to the following linguistic context would be the relative clauses that modify a (non fronted) object or complement NP which come at or towards the end of the sentence.

Here is another example, first given with parallel constructions in the paragraph (i.e. the rewrite) and then given without the parallel constructions (i.e. the original, unrewritten version.)

First the rewritten version: (the OK version)

### Example 5-5:

Our missionaries are prayed for corporately at church services, at the monthly praise and prayer meeting, and at meetings of support groups that have adopted one of our missionaries. Very personal matters are covered by two or three friends meeting specially.

Now the original, untampered version (which is non parallel and not OK).

### Example 5-6:

Other than personal prayer, our missionaries are prayed for at church services, the monthly praise and prayer meeting, support groups that have adopted one of our missionaries, and by two or three friends meeting to cover very personal items.

### 5.2.2 Illustrations of topic signalling

In the preamble on principles of clear writing, two issues were raised with regard to topic signalling. The first had to do with the *function of the topic sentence* in a paragraph, the second with *keeping a constant topic* within a paragraph. We start with the first.

## 5.2.2.1 Function of the topic sentence.

Make sure that the *first sentence* in a paragraph is the *topic sentence* for that paragraph. In other words, the rest of the paragraph, apart from the first sentence should be a comment or an expansion or an explanation etc. of the first sentence. If the first sentence of a paragraph is *not* the topic sentence, it probably means that some other sentence is. Therefore, the topic sentence has become 'buried' in the paragraph and it will be difficult for the reader to find it. So the reader finds the whole paragraph hard to follow because he hasn't a clear idea of what the author is talking about.

So, if the topic sentence isn't the first sentence in the paragraph, change things until it is. You could do this by swapping round the order of sentences or even by either deleting an initial non-topic sentence or 'gluing' that sentence onto the end of the preceding paragraph (if it fits). Also break a paragraph if you have changed the paragraph topic.

Here is an example that illustrates what happens when you bury your topic sentence in the middle of a paragraph.

### Example 5-7:

While it is true that actions and states in folk narrative and remote personal history both biographical and autobiographical are oriented time wise to the narrative present rather than to the present of narration, if the events of a personal history narrative occurred fairly recently in time it seems as if the reverse is true. In this case, the actions and states described are oriented time wise to the present of narration rather than to the narrative present.

This paragraph was extremely difficult to understand.

- (1) The sentences are far too long. The first sentence is over seven typed lines long and has multiple embedding.
- The topic sentence, 'If the events of a personal history narrative occurred fairly recently in time, it seems as if the reverse is true.' is deeply buried in the middle of the paragraph. If we take the sentence in quotes as a topic sentence, we find that the second sentence of the paragraph, 'In this case, the actions and states described are oriented time wise to the present of narration rather than to the narrative present.' follows from the topic sentence. This now gives us some clue as to what the paragraph was meant to mean. We can prune things a bit further by realising that 'the reverse' in the topic sentence, is spelled out in detail in the second sentence. Thus my attempted rewrite is

#### Example 5-8:

If the events of a personal history narrative occurred fairly recently in time, the actions and states described are oriented time wise to the present of narration rather than to the narrative present.

Notice I have deleted all of the first sentence up to the beginning of the if clause. If the author insisted on having that information in the paper, I would put it after my rewrite as follows.

#### Example 5-9:

If the events of a personal history narrative occurred fairly recently in time, the actions and states described are oriented time wise to the present of narration rather than to the narrative present.

This is in contrast to the marking of actions and states in folk narrative and remote personal history, which are oriented time wise to the narrative present.

I personally feel that this addition is unnecessary, because it has been mentioned before in the paper and is redundant.

(Note that here there is an added obscurity because of the terms 'narrative present' and 'present of narration.' In fact, the author did not define either of these terms in the paper. The terms are so similar to each other that it is extremely difficult if not impossible for most readers to even make an intelligent guess at what they mean and what the difference is between them.)

### 5.2.2.2 Keeping a constant topic

We shall now take up the second issue, i.e., keeping a constant topic within a paragraph.

If we keep a constant topic within a paragraph we will keep the topic of discussion clearly in the reader's mind and this should be the aim of every writer. This means, among other things, that the author must not skip randomly from topic to topic. If the author is careful about this then the reader is much more likely to follow the paper and to sustain interest.

Here is an example of a paragraph that is difficult to follow because it is not always clear what the topic is. The paragraph is also rewritten so as to make the topic clearer.

## Example 5-10: (unclear version)

In folk or remote biographical narrative, accomplished actions which function as setting and lead up to the beginning of the main eventline (i.e. the beginning of the story proper) are expressed in the realis perfective. Those actions which serve to move the narrative along the event line are always expressed in the irrealis imperfective. Accomplished actions which follow the climax of the story and are functioning as a conclusion (tying up loose ends as it were) are again expressed in the realis perfective.

The paragraph which makes up this example was very difficult to understand because the author skipped from one topic to another and then back again.

In order to do any useful rewrite job on this paragraph at all, one needs to read the original paper and look at the context of this paragraph so as to have a clear idea of what the original

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author was trying to accomplish. If we read the paper with this in mind, we can see that the author has been up to now, talking about the *irrealis imperfective*. He now wants to switch and talk about the function of the *realis perfective*.

Now look at the paragraph from the point of view of a reader confronting it for the first time and trying to understand it. In the immediately preceding context, the reader has been reading and thinking about the irrealis imperfective. Suddenly, he is confronted with this paragraph (i.e the example above) in which the *first* sentence talks about the *realis* perfective, the *second* sentence switches to talking about the *irrealis* perfective, and then the *third* sentence *switches back* again to talk about the *realis perfective*. By then the reader is thoroughly confused and doesn't know what the author is getting at and it is doubtful whether the author does either. The following is an attempted rewrite:

### Example 5-11:

In folk narrative or remote biographical narrative, actions which are on the eventline are always expressed in the *irrealis perfective*.

However, accomplished actions which form part of a setting leading up to the beginning of the main event line are expressed in the *realis perfective*. Similarly, accomplished actions which follow the climax of the story and are thus part of the conclusion are also in the realis perfective.

Note the following devices used in the rewrite to make things clearer.

- (1) The use of the paragraph break after the first sentence. This then makes the second sentence the topic sentence for the new paragraph which is about the realis perfective.
- (ii) The use of connectives and relational words like however, similarly, also to show how the different clause messages in the text relate to each other. Thus the however at the beginning of the second paragraph shows that there is a contrast between what is talked about there and what was talked about in the first paragraph (irrealis perfective) Again similarly at the beginning of the third sentence (second paragraph) shows that what the third sentence talks about is similar in many ways to what the second does.

#### 5.2.3 Illustrations on sentence length

Keep sentences *reasonably short* on the average. In particular, any sentence that is over four typed lines long probably needs cutting down to something shorter. Long sentences are always more difficult to understand. Some possible strategies for cutting down on sentence length are:

- (i) Consider putting a period at places where you have an *and*, and starting a new sentence. Make sure the final result is coherent though.
- (ii) Consider getting rid of some of your relative clauses. Are your relative clauses really necessary? One of the most difficult kinds of long sentence to understand is the long sentence with relative clauses. Sometimes relative clauses are necessary but often they are not. One should continually ask oneself the question 'Is my relative clause really necessary?' because if it is not, then the text as a whole is clearer without it. Often the same information could be put in a separate sentence.

Here is an example of a sentence made obscure by an inappropriate use of a relative clause:

#### Example 5-12:

The primary function of the imperfective aspect in Kalaba narrative is to mark backgrounded information which is acting as setting either initially to the whole narrative or at the beginning of individual episodes within the narrative.

This becomes clearer if we rewrite it as:

#### Example 5-13:

The primary function of the imperfective aspect in Kalaba is to mark verbs in setting information. Such information can be the overall setting for the whole narrative or a local setting at the beginning of an episode within the narrative.

Note what has been done: First, we have broken up a long sentence into two shorter sentences and in the process done away with the relative clause. Second, we have eliminated redundant words like 'backgrounded information.' Third, we have clarified the two kinds of setting information.

One problem with a sentence that is too long, is that you can't have informational prominence over the whole sentence. For a short sentence, you can. Read the two alternative versions through aloud and see where you put the phonological accents.

Here is another example. It is taken verbatim from the first draft of a workshop paper (of now undefined provenance and vintage.)

### Example 5-14:

Since past tense is inherently perfective in nature and since all of the final verbs in the body of the discourse use the tense/aspect morpheme -b which within the aspectual framework is both perfective and telic, assigning an aspectual function to the tense/aspect morpheme on the final verb, not only allows it to function symmetrically with the other verbs in the discourse but still enables it to be anchored to the last final verb.

First some comments on the above paragraph. This paragraph is very difficult to understand. Let us look at it and see why this is so. The following reasons stand out.

- (1) Excessive length. The whole paragraph consists of one sentence, and this sentence is far too long. It is in fact over seven typed lines long.
- (ii) Relative clause. There is a relative clause (immediately following 'morpheme -b' which tends to divert the reader's focus.
- (iii) Participial phrase. The participial phrase 'assigning an aspectual function to the tense/aspect morpheme on the final verb' is problematic because if the reader reads rapidly, he does not know immediately whether this phrase attaches itself to the immediately preceding or to the immediately following part of the sentence.
- (iv) Items with vague antecedents. There are two 'its' in the second part of the sentence. These are problematic because it is difficult for the reader to be sure which antecedent NP the 'it' connects up with. Thus the specific problems are:

The first 'it' (after 'only allows') could connect up with either 'aspectual function' or with 'tense/aspect morpheme' or with 'final verb'. Similarly, the second 'it' (after 'still enables...' probably connects up with 'the tense/aspect morpheme' but it is hard to be sure without consulting with the author.

Let us make a guess at what we think the author is trying to say, and reword the paragraph accordingly. It seems as if:

- (a) the paragraph proposes to assign an aspectual function to the morpheme -b,
- (b) all the material up to the first comma (i.e. the comma immediately following 'telic') is 'preamble'-kind of setting the stage for his main assertion which was (a),

(c) all the material after the second comma (i.e. the comma immediately following 'morpheme on the final verb') is 'postamble'. What it does is set out the advantages (or the author's motivation) for assigning an aspectual function to the morpheme -b (which was the main assertion of (a)).

If these our surmises above are correct, then the following would be a reasonable rewrite:

### Example 5-15:

We assign an aspectual function to the tense/aspect morpheme -b. This morpheme appears on all final verbs in the discourse. Its sense is both perfective and telic (if we remember that 'past tense' is inherently perfective in nature.)

The advantage of assigning an aspectual function to the tense/aspect morpheme -b on final verbs is that it allows the final verb to function symmetrically with other verbs in the discourse, even though the morpheme appears only on final verbs.

Comments: Note that the rewrite has four short sentences, instead of one long one. The perceptive reader will see that I had to make some guesses in order to arrive at the rewrite. In other words, the new version with shortened sentences brings to light a number of obscurities in the original version.

Therefore it is *imperative that the new version be checked through with the author of the paper*, and at that point further rewording will certainly be necessary. Both the consultant and the author need to be satisfied with the final version, but much more especially the author. It is his paper after all.

Further general comment: I hasten to add that (ii) and (iii) above are not to be interpreted to mean that we should never use relative clauses or participial phrases. Good authors will use them in the right places. What we need to remember here is that constructions like subordinate clauses, relative clauses, participial phrases, etc will always *sideline* information. The information that you as author really want the reader to dwell on and consider, you must put in *main clauses*.

Some sentences are extremely difficult to understand because there is too much embedding for the reader to follow.

### Example 5-16:

This policy statement is designed to ensure that our obedience to the great commission 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations' (Mt 28.19) is carried out by establishing a clear sense of direction and providing a framework within which decisions can be made.

What makes the above passage weak in impact as well as difficult to understand, is the excessive use of passives and nominalisations, thereby omitting the subjects of verbs and also the very long sentence. It isn't clear what establishes the 'clear sense of direction,' nor is it clear who makes the 'decisions', nor in fact, what 'decisions'. There are also roundabout and clumsy constructions like 'our obedience is carried out' when the simple verb 'obey' would convey the same information clearly and concisely. Hence the following attempted rewrite:

### Example 5-17:

It is the responsibility of every Christian to obey the Great Commission 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.' The purpose of the present policy statement is to establish a clear sense of direction in missionary matters, and to provide a framework within which relevant decisions can be made.

## 5.2.4 Illustrations on repetitions

Don't say the same thing twice in the same sentence or even in the same sentence sequence unless you are deliberately doing this for a special emphatic effect. Thus

### Example 5-18:

\*Experiments initiated to determine when corrosion began showed that the metal corroded upon contact with the saline solution,

less repetitive statement is better:

## Example 5-19:

Experiments showed that metal started to corrode when it touched the saline solution.

### 5.2.5 Illustrations on generalities and specifics

Be specific, avoid generalities. Thus, in describing an example do not say:

### Example 5-20:

\*The verb has a subject prefix

Rather say:

#### Example 5-21:

The verb kama 'sleep' has a subject prefix si '3p'

Here is another example. Instead of

### Example 5-22:

In example 29, line 1, the free nominal coreferential with the verb prefix is used to refer to a foregrounded topical participant.

Rather say:

### Example 5-23:

In example 29 line 1, the free nominal, *una* 'he', and the coreferential verb prefix, *wo*- 'he' are together used to refer to the foregrounded topical participant.

## 5.2.6 Illustrations of referentiality

Make sure that all *definite articles*, *indefinite articles*, *prepositions* and *logical connectives* are there. Don't leave them out. If you do drop them, your paper will sound like an incoherent series of jottings on the back of an envelope. This is because words signalling important relationships have been left out. The result is something incoherent and obscure.

Make sure that terms like this, that, it which have anaphoric (or cataphoric) reference really do refer to something in your text.

Underline key terms.

### 5.2.7 Illustrations regarding the choice of words

If you choose the right words to say things, your paper will be a lot clearer. However, if you choose less suitable words to say the same thing, you risk being obscure. The following are some principles that an internationally known teacher of clear writing recommends that you follow in your choice of words.

### 5.2.7.1 Prefer the simple word to the complex

Choose the simple rather than the complex word unless the more complex word really does express what you want to say a lot better Thus avoid something like \* 'Ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny'. Fowler says

familiaris better thanfarfetchedconcreteabstractsingle worda circumlocutionSaxon wordRomance word

Question any words you use that have more than three syllables to see if you really need them. Sometimes you do, often you don't. Thus for instance:

utilizationis more complex thanusemodificationchangeinitialfirstoptimumbestencountermeetdemonstrateshowunavailabilitylack

Big men use little words, little men use big words.

#### 5.2.7.2 Prefer the familiar word to the unfamiliar.

But also cultivate a large vocabulary so that in any situation you can choose exactly the word you want.

## 5.2.7.3 Avoid unnecessary words.

Contrast the following two examples:

#### Example 5-24:

Careful thought should be given to the desirability of being in attendance at the convention and the value accruing to the company from such attendance before asking us for approval of the expenditure.

### Example 5-25:

Before you ask for convention expenses, think carefully whether the trip will be of value to the company.

### 5.2.7.4 Put action in your verbs.

Active voice is better than passive voice.

Verbs are better than nominalizations.

Weak verbs like be, make, have plus a nominalisation are weaker than the corresponding verb. Thus:

Substitute is stronger than make substitution.

Intend have intention.

Impose become an imposition.

## 5.3 Some further general hints on clear writing

- 1. Write as you talk. In other words remember you have a reader who needs to understand and think of the interpersonal component that's necessary.
- 2. Don't just set down facts, show their implications as well. This means that data should be organized and explained.
- Tell the most important facts first, then fill in with the other details later. That way
  the reader will get what you want to get across (and you should be clear in your own
  mind what you want to get across). Detective fiction suspense makes for poor
  technical writing.
- 4. Give plenty of previews so that the reader is on track.

Any message must be carefully organized before it can be either spoken well or written well.

### 5.4 Spacing

There is one aspect of the format that needs to be adhered to very strictly, the spacing.

First of all, the normal spacing between lines is *double spaced*. (Double spaced does *not* mean space-and-a-half, if your typewriter has three spacing settings, single, space-and-a-half, and double, then the biggest is the one you must use.) The spacing requirement means that there cannot be any two lines *anywhere* in your manuscript that are spaced less than double space apart. Not even between the vernacular and the gloss.

Second, all the margins on the page, on the top, bottom and both sides must be wide - about 1 1/2" is right. Resist all temptation to type just one more line at the bottom of the page (and ous reduce the margin at the bottom); similarly resist all temptation to spill over the right hand margin for the sake of getting the extra word in the line. It isn't worth it.

In addition, the spacing between paragraphs should be *double normal spacing* from the end of the example. Similarly for the beginning and end of a section.

The reason this is asked for is that lots of room has to be left for comments on the analysis, suggestions for further analysis, suggestions on wording, etc., and the best place to put such things is right by the part of the write-up or chart where it belongs. It saves endless searching through scraps of paper, etc.

Please adhere strictly to these requirements. It may well be impossible for a consultant to work profitably with your write-up if you don't, and you, yourself, will find it harder to work with afterwards. Remember that although paper is unfortunately getting pretty expensive, it is still a lot cheaper than lost time, lost effort, and frustration.

For any paper that is sent to an editor, these requirements must be strictly adhered to because he needs the spaces for editorial comments and instructions to the typesetter.

An editor will simply reject a paper that does not meet these requirements. Or even if he accepts it, which is improbable, you will be asked to retype it and resubmit. So remember, either single spacing or narrow margins is definitely out.

#### Chapter 6:

# Checking the First Draft

You have now completed your first draft and this is an important milestone in your progress towards writing a paper. The first draft represents your efforts towards organizing what you know of your analysis into a coherent whole, and now you are in a position to make further progress on your analysis, using the first draft as a tool.

However, before you can effectively use the first draft as a tool, and certainly before your consultant can use it to help you, you need to smooth out your first draft so that it reads clearly. Because if your first draft doesn't read clearly, your consultant will soon get bogged down on mechanical issues of grammar, etc. and so he will not be able to concentrate his attention on issues which deal directly with the language analysis. So the rest of this chapter is on how to check your first draft.

A paper is clear if there is:

- correct grammar
- · correct usage of words and terms
- a good logical order of presentation
- data clearly presented and explained

So the following questions are designed with these matters in mind.

### 6.1 Checking grammar

Check your basic grammar by asking a colleague to read your draft before you do your handin version and make appropriate corrections before your final typing or at least before handing it in. Do not make written corrections to a draft before you hand it in, unless the corrections are extremely minor.

Pay especial attention to the following:

(i) Make sure that every sentence has a subject, a finite verb, starts with a capital and ends with a period.

- (ii) Make sure that when you use expressions like it, this + noun, these + noun, those + noun, the + noun, that there is an item in the preceding discourse to which such an expression refers.
- (iii) Make sure that definite articles, indefinite articles, demonstratives that should come before nouns are not omitted.
- (iv) Use logical connectives like but, however, nevertheless, . . . since, because, so, . . . if, provided that, . . . freely. Making your logical connections between your clauses and sentences explicit is a great help to understanding.
- (v) Be sparing in your use of nominalizations too many nominalizations make a text obscure.
- (vi) No sentence should be more than four typed lines long. Shorten sentences by removing embedding, cutting down on subordinate clauses, putting a period where there is an 'and'.
- (vii) Check your paragraphs to see that the topic sentence is the first sentence of a paragraph. If the topic sentence is somewhere else, most readers won't find it and they will be lost.
- (viii) Use parallel statements; avoid non parallel statements.
  - (ix) Essential information should be together not scattered.

## 6.2 Checking style

## 6.2.1 Topic sentences.

- Does each paragraph start off with the topic sentence for the paragraph?
- Most readers expect the first sentence of a paragraph to tell them what the
  rest of the paragraph is about. When this expectation is met, the reader finds
  the paragraph easy to read and understand, but when it isn't, the reader can
  get surprised and bewildered because he will most likely lose his way
  through the paragraph (and may well remain lost for the rest of the paper).
- So, if on checking your paragraphs you find one in which the topic sentence, (i.e. the sentence that tells the reader what the paragraph is about) is buried away in the middle of a paragraph somewhere, then it is important for you to change the order of the sentences in that paragraph so that the topic sentence does come first in it. To do this may involve you in rewriting some of the sentences a bit as well as changing their order around. Also

avoid having a topic sentence which is a negation.

### 6.2.2 Length of sentences.

- Check your sentences for length. Any sentence that is over four typed lines long needs to be broken up into something shorter, otherwise the reader will almost certainly be lost.
- Usually sentences are too long because there are too many relative clauses,
  i.e. too much embedding. The presentation is often a lot clearer if the
  information in the relative clauses can be put into straight independent
  clauses. (This may not always be possible but often succeeds handsomely.)

#### 6.2.3 Nominalizations and passives

- Check your writing for the number of nominalizations and passives in it.

  Whenever you can, replace a sentence with a nominalization by a sentence with an active verb and a passive sentence by one with an active verb.
- The reason nominalizations are obscure is that they are really verbs made into nouns, but the subject and the object of the verb are left out when you nominalize (the verb). So when a reader meets a sentence with lots of nominalizations in it, he will have only a vague idea as to what the subjects and objects of the verbs are. And especially if there are many such undefined subjects and objects, the reader will be very confused. (But use your judgement.)
- In a similar way, passives often leave out the agent (i.e. the subject of the
  corresponding active clause, i.e. John wrote the paper.often goes to just The
  paper was written. and the old subject John gets omitted. And sometimes
  with too many 'undefined subjects' the reader is left in a vague, confused
  state.
- In short, use active verbs whenever you can.

### 6.2.4 Connectives and pointers

• Be generous and explicit in your use of logical connectives like but, therefore, the reason why . . . , on the contrary . . . etc.

• Logical connectives show the reader the way the argument is going, (for example, whether the next sentence follows logically from the last or whether it is unexpected and there is a change of direction, and so on). Consider, for example:

#### Example 6-3:

John arrived late (so) his wife missed her plane.

#### Example 6-4:

John finished his paper (but) Bill didn't.

The versions with connectives included are clearer.

- Many such logical connectives come at the beginning of a sentence and you, as a writer, often have an option of either putting them in or leaving them out. If you leave them all out, it is almost certain that you will leave your reader guessing at some points and he may well lose the thread of your argument. If you put them all in, at least your paper will be clear and everyone will know what your argument is and so be able to comment on your argument. Once you have gotten your argument clearly worded you 'may want to revise the wording somewhat, and then is the time to weed out any redundant connectives. But start by putting them all in.
- In a similar vein, one very useful way of listing a number of related items or topics or
  propositions in a paragraph is to have them introduced by pointers like first, second,
  third, or something like them. But you need to make your scheme hold together. Thus if
  you have a second or a third, make sure you have a first somewhere. If you happen not to
  have, put one in.
- In short, give your reader all the signposts that you can.

### 6 2 5 Topicalizers

• Usually, the first element in a sentence tells the reader what the sentence is about.

 Two very strongly marked topicalization devices are the it-cleft sentence and the pseudocleft (or wh-cleft) as illustrated in respectively:

#### Example 6-5:

It was John who solved the problem

#### Example 6-6:

What John solved was the reduplication problem.

Use them sparingly but to good effect.

### 6.3 Checking examples

- Are they properly glossed?
- Does the free translation correspond to the morpheme gloss in other words, can an
  intelligent reader who does not speak the language and who does not know the culture
  convert from the morpheme gloss to the free translation in a reasonable sort of way, i.e.
  without guessing and without having to ask you any further (oral) questions.
- Have you said quite clearly what each example illustrates and have you checked to see
  that the example really does illustrate it? Have you said how the example illustrates the
  principle. The reader should not have to guess.
- Are morphemes under discussion marked prominently in some way?
- When you write the explanation of an example, first write the explanation of the example and how the example applies to the general theory. Add random comments and the negative side after this. In other words, don't 'snow' your reader with a lot of detail about what the example is not about and what it does not illustrate first or you will risk losing him and confusing him. The reader expects to know what the example is about and does illustrate first, then he can relate the current example to the previous examples and the development up to that point. If you fulfill this expectation, the reader will be with you and then you can put in your comments and the negative side. In short avoid the NOT A BUT B approach; the B NOT A is much better.

### Chapter 7:

## After the First Draft

Your first draft is an effort to organise your analysis as far as you could at that stage. It is a stepping stone towards the final analysis, an instrument to be used to help you achieve that goal. As such, you would expect it to be incomplete. The next two chapters are about how to work on that first draft until you get a good faithful analysis and clear presentation.

The first step is to *clarify* that first draft. This consists mainly of *tidying up the grammar* and the data. A certain amount of rewriting (usually editing an old file) will do it. The steps you need to take to clarify a first draft are set out in the pages that immediately follow. The object of clarifying a first draft is to get it into the shape that a consultant who has worked with you on the topic can understand reasonably easily. By this I mean that he can understand the clarified draft well enough that he can discuss the *linguistic* issues with you at some depth without having to constantly stumble over obstacles of grammar or obscure wording. And in particular so that he can be clear on what claims you are making, and he can see how the various pieces of data that you have cited bear on the claims you are making. Then he will be able to some real positive contributions towards improving your analysis.

After clarifying the first draft, we can concentrate on linguistic issues, i.e. improving the analysis and the presentation.

## 7.1 Clarifying the first draft.

Go through the following steps

# 7.1.1 Reading and mechanical repairs of the obscurities

Get someone to read the paper, and to point out where it needs clarification, especially in the following respects. (If no one will read it, try and check it yourself.)

Clarification may be needed in several respects

• Unclear sentences, because the grammar is bad.

- Unclear data or unclear explanation of what the data are meant to illustrate. Under this
  often is insufficient data (remedy, get more) or misleading data (i.e. data that does not
  illustrate what it purports to illustrate.)
- Unclear or nonexistent titles and subtitles, and non existent previews.

The sections of a paper should have good titles; the sections themselves can be divided up into subsections and each subsection should have its own *subtitle*. The wording of titles and subtitles needs to be carefully chosen. A good title or subtitle captures the essential content of the section or subsection it relates to. A good title (subtitle) will help your reader grasp what a section (subsection) is about, and incidentally, the choosing of it will have helped you towards a better understanding as well. A poorly chosen title (subtitle) will not only not do this, but could even be misleading and get you confused. A title can have a life of its own, and either help your understanding or hinder it. So don't despise the importance of titles.

Sometimes you need to break up long sections into shorter sections, each with its own good subtitle.

A *preview* is something that you write to tell your reader what is to come in your paper. It gives your reader a forward look, it shows him where you are going. It maintains his interest and channels his expectations in the right way. Use previews wisely, don't neglect them.

## 7.1.2 Outlining

Make a one page outline of your paper. Something like a short table of contents would be adequate. Then check your outline for the following things:

- Uncovered topics. Is there some topic which you need to cover that you haven't yet
  covered? If so, then develop that topic, gather data for it and write it up and fit it into the
  paper at the appropriate place. But only do it on topics that you need to treat in order to
  make a coherent paper; this is not, in general, a command to double or treble the length of
  your paper!!
- Logical arrangement. Look at the logical arrangement. Is it the best for developing the arguments and the points that you want to make? Would the argument be neater and easier to follow if you were to reorder the logical arrangement.

• Main themes. What are the main themes that the paper is built around? Are they clearly stated, reiterated if necessary, and well supported by data?

### 7.1.3 Checking the argumentation

- Do your data *support your arguments?* Data should not just 'be there', it should support your arguments, and you should explain carefully *how* it does support your arguments.
- Think of *counterexamples* to your arguments. Deal with them by modifying your description at the appropriate points. (Trying to disprove a hypothesis is often the best way to strengthen it and clarify it.)

### 7.1.4 Bibliography

- How does the bibliography speak to the points you make in your paper? Have you acknowledged the sources of any ideas in the paper that are not your own? Have you commented on them in the appropriate places?
- How does your development differ from the development that is accepted as standard in the bibliography? Have you made these differences clear? Justified your divergence?
- Make a list of references as part of your paper. Use the format recommended by the journal for such things.

## 7.2 Improving the analysis

It has already been mentioned that a first draft is typically full of holes and imperfections. This is no reflection on the author, it merely means that this is the level of mastery of the topic that he has achieved up to this point. All authors go through this stage when they are still struggling to understand better. It is normal and it's nothing to be ashamed of. We all go through this stage before we do better.

So far, we have clarified the first draft; that is to say, we have removed the gross obscurities and defects of the raw first draft. What now?

The next stage in the work on the paper is to fix up the *content*, the *logic* and the *presentation*. In actual fact, these three things are closely linked together. Often, it's the logical holes that give you leads on how to improve your content. And again, the presentation is closely linked with the content, i.e. what you are presenting, and with the logic, i.e., the steps in your reasoning.

We start assuming that we already have a clarified first draft. This means that anyone reading your clarified first draft will understand how far you have got. The time is now ripe to further *improve the analysis*. This can be done in the three following ways:

#### 7.2.1 Exploring relationships and generalisations.

- Looking at the points made in the paper so far, are there relationships between the points you have made? Are these relationships already clearly stated in your paper so that you can begin to see a *whole*, rather than just a number of isolated points (or propositions?)
- Looking at the points made, can any two (or more) of them be lumped together into one single point which is more general in application than any of the separate component points? If so, you have arrived at a generalisation. You have made a very important step forward because it is the generalisations that enable you to see the language as a whole, rather than as a large number of disparate and isolated bits.
- Can your generalisations be applied to other kinds of data in the language?

### 7.2.2 Exploring new directions

- As you start seeing your analysis as a whole, can you see new directions in which your
  investigation should go, based on, either your knowledge of general linguistic theory, or
  of the typological properties of languages in the language family, or your sense of
  wholeness, by which you see the analysis as having holes in it that need to be filled.
- How far you can and should go in these new directions depends on how much time and data you have available. (Hence the value of writing an early first draft, so that these new directions can be known when you have plenty of time to work on them.) In any event, you should aim to finish up with a coherent paper, even if you have to limit the scope of you investigation.

#### 7.2.3 Revising the data

- Subclassifying. Can any of your data lists be subclassified in a meaningful sort of way? If so, make such a subclassification and state clearly the criteria you use to do the subclassing.
- Illustrative power. Does all the data you have cited really illustrate the point you are trying to make? If some of it does not, then you either need more data of the kind of data that does illustrate your point, or perhaps the point itself needs rewording. Perhaps both.

- Is each point illustrated with data? With adequate data?
- Have you any residues or *counterexamples*. Have you dealt with them?

### 7.3 Improving the presentation

When we talk about presentation, we are considering broadly the way you put your material across. Both what you say, and the way you say it are important. A good paper will be right in how much you say, not too much and not too little so that you get the quantity right. It will also be right in the way you say what you say, in that what you say needs to be said properly so that you get the quality right too.

### 7.3.1 Resolving quantity defects

Let us consider now the issue of *quantity*, that is, of *how much* you say. In most first drafts, there will be some places where you say too much, and other places where you say too little.

Under too much there are the *irrelevant* and the *verbose*. This is the fat that needs to be trimmed.

#### 7.3.1.1 Eliminate the irrelevant.

In certain parts of your paper, there may be information which does nothing to establish or support the point you are trying to make. Such information might something like interesting observations on the data, or interesting comments on some item in the bibliography. All this can be interesting, but unless it speaks to the point you are trying to make, such information will, in fact, divert your reader's attention from what you are really trying to say, and so will make your paper more difficult to understand. Therefore, eliminate such extraneous information, or if you feel very strongly attached to it, relegate it to a footnote. Don't be squeamish about this.

Some people try to put everything into their paper for fear of losing something, but the unfortunate effect is something very obscure and complex. The author really needs to sort out the strands and put to one side what is not relevant. One's purpose in writing is not to just write down everything we know, but rather to give information and arguments to support and establish the points we are trying to make. Irrelevant information need not be in the paper, and so it should not.

### 7.3.1.2 Abridge the verbose.

Some parts of the paper may be very verbose; the same thing may have been said several times in the *same* paragraph without your being aware of it. You might have repeated the same ideas using the same words or you might have said the same thing several times using different words. Or you might have used many words to say something when fewer words would have conveyed the same idea more clearly. This kind of writing probably came about because when you did the first draft you were both struggling to get anything expressed at all, and also very anxious to leave nothing out. But now is the time to trim it down. Say what you want to say clearly, say it once only, and leave it at that.

Similarly, in your first draft, the same thing may have been said several times in different parts of the paper. The question to ask yourself is, 'Do you really want it that way?' There are times, in fact, when you do need to repeat something in order to emphasise a point. But more often than not, the repetition has been unintentional; you wrote in the information for the second or third time round without being fully aware that you had already said it first time round. So what you need to decide now is: 'Where is the place in the paper where the information is really going to be useful? Is it the first occurrence, or the second, or the third?' Once you have answered this question, then keep the information where you really need it and delete it everywhere else. In particular, delete it from the places where it 'might be useful'. Information that is not working for you is a hindrance and needs to be eliminated.

Under too little, there is information that is not there when it should be, and information that is there but not enough of it. The first is like holes that need to be filled in, the second like skeletons that need flesh.

#### 7.3.1.3 Fill in the holes.

In other words, if there is information that is not there but should be, put it in. The most likely lacks are:

- A step or steps missed out in an argument, making it too difficult for most people to follow. (Perhaps at the time you wrote the first draft, you weren't very sure of what the precise steps were yourself. At that time it was OK to write it like that, better write something than nothing at all. But now is the time to fill in the missing steps
- Some explanation that has been lacking, making it difficult for your reader to see what you mean. Verbalise your explanation and write it down.

Terms that have not been defined. It is important to define your terms. If you don't,
people will either not know what you are talking about, or think you are talking about
something that you are not talking about. So the reader will either not understand you, or
misunderstand you.

## 7.3.1.4 Expand the overcondensed or oversketchy.

This is the information that is there but there is not enough of it, for easy understanding. Like skeletons that still need flesh on them.

- Statements that are too general (i.e. not specific enough) or too abstract (can't be pinned
  down to any concrete piece of data) need to be made more specific or the reader will have
  to struggle to understand you.
- Often what is needed is more good illustrative data, well explained.

### 7.3.2 Resolving quality defects.

Quality defects can mean the false, the inaccurate, the vague, or the ambiguous. In quality defects, it isn't a matter of too much or too little information. Rather, the problem is that the information is factually deficient in some way.

#### 7.3.2.1 The false

In the worst possible case, the information is just plain false. What the paper says at this point, simply is not true. Sometimes the data is incorrect, sometimes the wrong conclusions are drawn from the data, i.e. the data does not support the conclusions that have been claimed. Sometimes another author has been quoted wrongly or interpreted wrongly. It is clear that such errors need to be corrected.

#### 7.3.2.2 The inaccurate

Or the information concerning any of the above categories can be inaccurate. If so it needs correcting

## 7.3.2.3 The ambiguous

A statement is ambiguous if it is possible for the reader to interpret it in more than one way. Frequently, ambiguity arises because the author has unwittingly used a grammatical

construction which may admit of an ambiguous interpretation. Two of the most common pitfalls in this regard are (i) the connective 'or', and (ii) the use of nominalisations.

- (i) The connective 'or' is tricky because often the reader does not know whether what was involved is an alternative in meanings or an alternative in terminology. Sometimes the author uses 'or' because he is indecisive in his own mind as to which sense he is really dealing with, and he passes this indecision on to the reader.
- (ii) Again the use of nominalisations has its dangers because often the reader has to guess who the subject (and object) of the corresponding verb refer to.

### 7.3.2.4 The vague

A statement is *vague* if it is difficult for the reader to get a clear meaning from it. Vagueness is due principally to one or two reasons, either

- (i) a presentation is couched in *terms that are too general* so that it is impossible for the reader to understand specific details, or
- (ii) a presentation uses *undefined terms* so that the reader is unsure of the meaning of some of the terms used.

Often vague or ambiguous terms appear in a paper because the author is not yet clear in his own mind on certain details of the analysis. Putting it in other words, he hasn't yet got the information needed to make a clearer statement. Again this was all right in a first draft, because at that earlier point in the project, the important thing was to get something down on paper, But now is the time to get things clearer.

The remedy is usually to look at more data and refine just that part of the analysis which would enable the author to make the vague or ambiguous statement more precise. Enough data of the right kind will help the author get from a vague general statement to something more specific, precise and concrete.

When a consultant is checking a consultee's paper, alterations to vague and ambiguous statements should always be made in consultation with the author. If, in fact, the original ambiguity or vagueness was due to some lack of clarity in the author's mind, then it is clear that a guess on the consultant's part as to which way things should go, is a risky method of 'solving the problem'. What is needed is first, more clarity in the author's mind, and this should easily and naturally lead to clarity in the writing.

The consultant's job here is to point out the ambiguity or vagueness to the author, and discuss with him ways it might be resolved. In other words, the consultant should put options to the consultee, and the consultee should decide if any of the options suggested will fit the data. If none fit, look at still further options. The problem should not be shelved.

### 7.3.3 interpersonal factors

Lastly, there is the *interpersonal* component. How will the reader react *emotionally* to your paper? This is an important question. Because if your reader has a negative emotional reaction to your paper, then this may cloud his judgement so much that he won't appreciate the things in your paper that are good and worthy of real consideration. So we need to ask ourselves: What sorts of things in a paper might provoke a positive reaction in a reader, and what sorts of things might provoke a negative reaction?

Your paper needs to make its claims clearly and deliver what it claims to deliver by the end of the paper. It needs to be true to its claims, in other words you need to verify every claim you make with good data, well presented.

A good paper should also say things that are reasonable, not things that are unreasonable. Therefore, amongst other things, all unreasonable claims and statements need to be either eliminated or modified. There are various kinds of unreasonable claims or statements, including

- Unverifiable statements. Sometimes, statements are made that cannot possibly be verified. These need to be restated so that they are either factual or verifiable (or falsifiable).
- Exaggerated claims. Sometimes claims are made that are exaggerated; such claims should be rewritten to reflect the facts

For instance, once I claimed in a paper 'This treatment will solve all problems in deixis', whereas all I could have claimed was that it solved certain problems in pronouns and deictic verbs of motion. I was excited at the time but it still didn't justify such an exaggerated claim.

Unverifiable statements and exaggerated claims both baffle and annoy your reader. Too many of them will destroy your credibility as an author. Either justify them or remove them from your paper.

 Misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the current literature (or current linguistic theory.) One should try very hard to understand what other linguists are saying. Avoid attacks on other linguists.

One is free to disagree with the theories and conclusions of other linguists; that's a legitimate part of the academic debate. But disagree in such a way that you don't make enemies or cause any of your readers to be threatened.

Above all, avoid even the slightest mention of anything personal or any reflection on the intelligence, ability or integrity of any author. (Linguistic and anthropological literature has unfortunately not always been entirely free of such blemishes).

Let us therefore remember the following piece of wisdom 'You really don't need to prove everyone else wrong in order to show that your own work is good.' (Professor Michael Halliday.)

### Chapter 8:

## Finishing Off

There are a number of things that must be done in order to finish a paper off. They take quite a bit of time, so leave yourself *enough* time to do them all.

#### 8.1 Footnotes.

Prepare proper footnotes in the right format. Note that the following footnotes are obligatory:

- · Language family affiliation,
- Information on your data corpus, and your language experience
- Information on the division of labour if there is more than one author to the paper
- Summary information on the phonology of the language, if your paper is on grammar or discourse
- · Acknowledgments to public bodies, contracts, consultants, language helpers

Other footnotes are a matter of your choice. They deal with information that you want to keep in the paper but which is not central to the main argument of the paper.

### 8.2 Appendices

Prepare appendices for material that does not belong to the body of the paper, but which you want in.

## 8.3 Diagrams and charts.

Draw diagrams and charts. Make sure they are neat, well labelled, self explanatory and with a good revealing title.

### 8.4 References

Prepare a references section according to the format recommended by the journal you are submitting to.

## 8.5 Terminology check

Check your terminology to see whether it is consistent, and standard usage.

### 8.6 Mechanical checks.

Check mechanical things like

- spelling
- punctuation
- numbering of sections,
- numbering of examples
- numbering of pages

# Appendix A: What a paper needs to have in order to be good

Here is a list of the things that a good paper needs to have. It will give you a better idea of what you need to do. A good paper has:

- (i) an adequate amount of well documented, well explained data,
- (ii) a good logical organisation. This usually implies:
  - a good division into sections, with appropriate subtitles for each section,
  - no internal contradictions,
  - · a clear logical thread which runs right through the paper
- (iii) a good *link with current work* in the field. This includes reference to and acknowledgement of current work as it bears on the work of the paper, and a good list of references at the end.
- (iv) a good introduction,
- (v) a good conclusion
- (vi) a good abstract
- (vii) appropriate *acknowledgements* (to language helpers, collaborators, consultants, and other who have had input into the paper, institutions)
- (viii) typed in suitable format for the organ of publication.

# Appendix B: Steps in writing a paper

The following are the steps you need to take to write a good paper.

### 1. Determining the problem

#### 2. Preliminary solutions

- Data gathering
- · Forming hypotheses and brainstorming
- Organising the data to check the hypotheses
- Arriving at the preliminary solutions

### 3. First draft

- Making provisional table of contents
- Collating the preliminary solutions
- · Writing the provisional abstract
- Writing the first draft

Note that the first draft is a *tool* you use to get you to the final solution. It is *not* in itself the final solution but only a step on the way. We need to be very clear on this.

## 4. Routine check of the first draft

This is done by the author after writing and before handing in. The author checks the first draft he has just written for

- Grammar and style checks
- Checks of examples

### 5. Consultant check of first draft

The consultant checks the first draft for

- Obscurities (i.e. what he doesn't understand.)
- Gaps (i.e. what has not been covered which should have been covered.)
- Contradictions (i.e. bits of the solution which seem to contradict one another.)

Note that a first draft isn't 'wrong' because it has these things. In fact, most first drafts do have these things, and it is useful to have these things pointed out because then the author knows what needs to be worked on.

## 6. Clarifying the first draft

- The author needs first to decide whether to rework in depth the whole of the
  first draft, or just part of it. Sometimes, just part of the first draft will rework
  into a very useful and insightful study. Don't bite off more than you can
  chew. Be realistic
- For the part that you decide to rework, you must first clarify it by dealing
  with the obscurities, gaps and contradictions that your consultant and others
  have pointed out to you. When you have clarified it in this way, it is ready to
  be reread by your consultant (and by you).

## 7. Improving the analysis and presentation

This involves writing the second and subsequent drafts.

Once the clarified first draft has been reread by the consultant and yourself, you are ready to discuss how to rework it to improve the analysis and presentation. Some of the things that you will probably need to do on this reworking are:

- (1) Gather more data to fill in the gaps (and perhaps to resolve the contradictions).
- (ii) Rearrange your argument so that it is more logical and easier to follow.
- (iii) Restate your solutions so that they fit the data better, so that they fit more data, and/or so that the various partial solutions can be subsumed under one or a few simple general principles.
- (iv) Read current published articles that relate either theoretically or data-wise to the work that you are doing, and add information to your paper that relates your work to other published work. Sometimes this might be quite minor, other times it may involve quite a lot of rewriting.
- (v) Determine what the general theme of your paper is, what the points are that you are trying to establish, and then restructuring your paper to fit.

- (vi) Certain parts of the paper will need to be rewritten for clarity. Don't think of this as punishment for having written a 'lousy first draft', because it isn't. Your first draft was the best that you could do with the knowledge that you had at the time. But now, you are in a position to improve on your understanding. Note that you wouldn't be in this position if you had not written the first draft.
- (vii) Divide up your paper into sections (you may have, of course, already done so quite early on) and give appropriate titles to all the sections and subsections. Good titles are not only important to the reader, they also help your understanding.

### 8. Finishing off.

This includes

- Footnotes on
  - language family affiliation
  - summary of phonology (for grammar and discourse papers)
  - information on data and on your language experience
  - acknowledgments
  - others
- Appendices
- Diagrams and charts
- References
- Terminology check
- Mechanical checks on spelling, punctuation, numbering, data examples

## Appendix C: First draft check before handing in

### 1. General Check:

- (1) Have you numbered all your pages consecutively?
- (2) Are your examples numbered consecutively?
- (3) Is your name on each page?
- (4) Is the paper typed with correct *spacing*? Specifically, is it *everywhere double* spaced, with wide margins, and proper extra spacing between paragraphs and between examples?
- (5) Are your data and examples set out in a way which is easily intelligible?
- (6) Can the free translation be reconstructed from the morpheme gloss?
- (7) Are morphemes under special discussion prominently displayed in some way, e.g. by being capitalized?
- (8) Have you make all the appropriate punctuation, grammar and style checks?
- (9) Are all your charts and diagrams clearly labelled?

## Grammar, Punctuation and Style Checks:

Concerning (8), on punctuation, grammar and style checks, the following checks should be made *before* you hand in - or better still, before you type. Do not hand in a paper that has not been checked and corrected in these respects.

- 8.1 Does every sentence have a subject and a verb?
- 8.2 Does every sentence start with a capital letter and finish with a period?
- 8.3 Have you checked all *demonstratives* and all uses of the pronoun 'it' to be sure that they refer back to something in the previous discourse?

- 8.4 Have you made sure that all nouns and noun phrases are preceded by a definite or indefinite article? (There are a few exceptions to this rule, but very few.)
- 8.5 Have you checked the length of your sentences? Any sentence more than four typed lines long needs to be rewritten.
- 8.6 Have you eliminated all unnecessary relative clauses?
- 8.7 Look at your paragraphs. Does the first sentence in each paragraph lead into what the paragraph is about? Is it a good topic sentence? Such a topic sentence should be short, and in general it should not be a *negation*.

# Appendix D: How to waste paper and save time and nerves

## (1) If you have

(a) a chart that you started half way down a page and there's no room to finish it. Don't recopy the chart. Do cut the chart out and paste it on the top of a full size page. Then patch up the bottom of the first sheet which has been lost by cutting, with another half sheet of blank paper so that all sheets are full size.

Or better still start all charts on a fresh clean sheet.

A chart split over two pages is very difficult to use. Avoid them.

(b) a written paragraph and it needs a couple of sentences in its middle to make better sense

Don't rewrite the paragraph

Do write the additional sentences necessary and splice them into the existing paragraph with scissors and paste or, of course, on a computer.

(c) a written a paragraph and it doesn't quite makes sense where it is but fits nicely somewhere else in your write-up

Don't rewrite the paragraph

Do cut out the paragraph and splice it in where it fits.

(2) Start every new topic on a fresh sheet or in a new computer file. This way you can shuffle the order of your sheets about as your write-up develops. You would be much less likely to do this if you had several topics on one page or if a new topic had started quarter way or half way down a page. (3) Leave wide margins top, bottom and both sides and plenty of space between lines and paragraphs. This way you can make corrections, comments and additions either in the margins or in between paragraphs. In any case you are making these alterations right at the point in the text where they are relevant and this in much more useful than making them on a separate sheet of paper which can get lost but is in any case removed from where it needs to be. (This is a case where one pays with paper to get better organization).

